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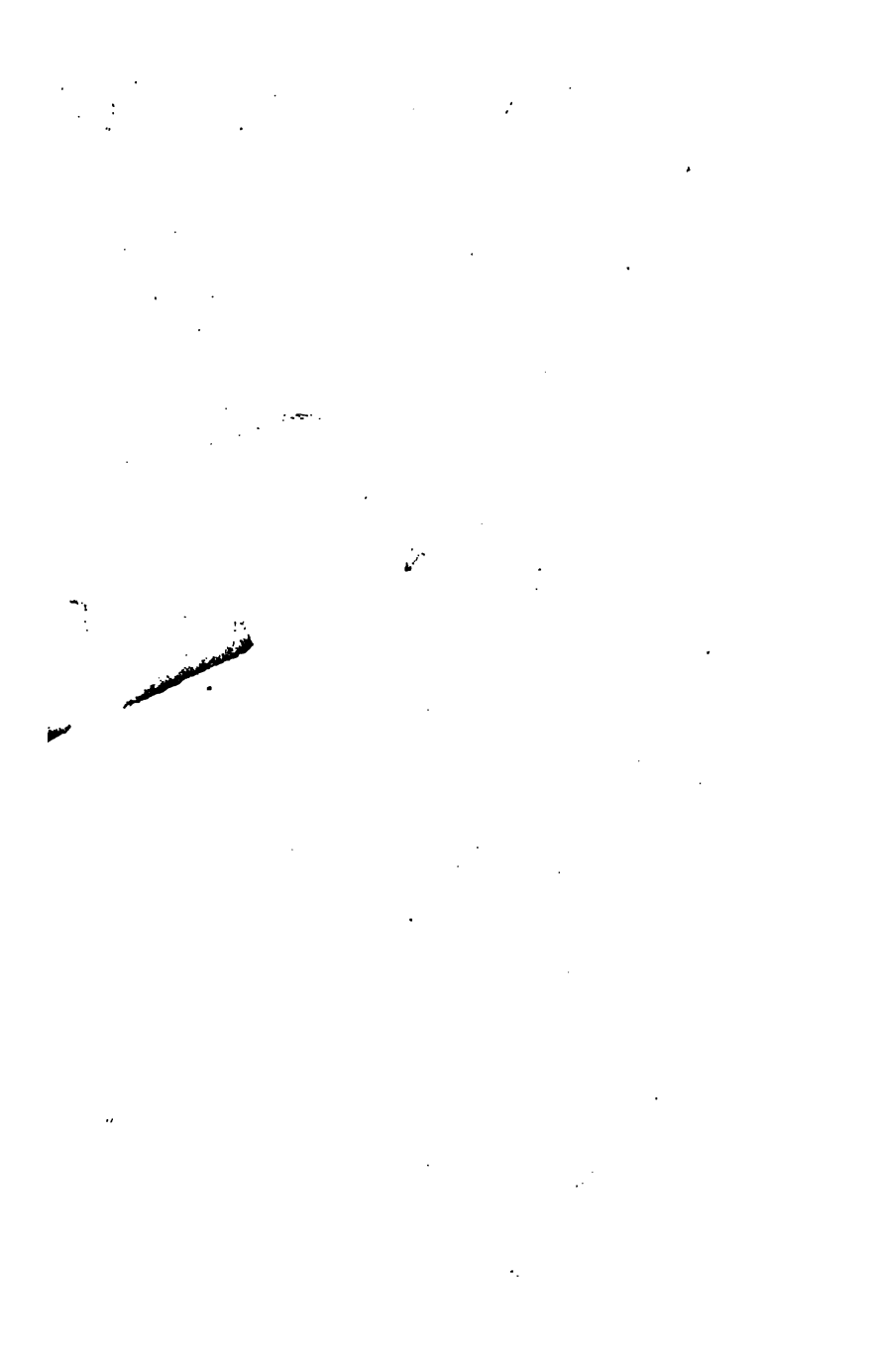
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LOG
OF THE "NORSEMAN"

J. W. GILBART-SMITH



THE LOG O' THE "NORSEMAN"

THE
LOG O' THE "NORSEMAN"

BY
J. W. GILBART-SMITH

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SONNETS.

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THE LOG O' THE "NORSEMAN."



MARSEILLES.

I.

WITHIN the city which an Emperor's pride
Decked to commemorate his sovereign sway,
One that invokes the Muse doth turn aside
To dedicate to her his votive lay.
Slumbrous upon the bosom of the bay
A fair bark dreams, but he in pensive mood
Wends 'mid the deepening shadows of the day,
Where friend nor foe may trouble nor intrude ;—
Stranger within a city's peopled solitude.

II.

To him it seems no longer than a year,
Howbeit nigh a score have swiftly flown,
Since he in merry childhood lingered here ;
Thoughtless as one to grief and care unknown,
Content with all things, save with youth alone.
Small marvel, as he treads the seaward heights,*
That life seems but the spring of life full-grown,—
Since Memory wiles him youthward in her flights,
And yields the reveries in which his soul delights.

III.

Not of himself he museth : who would dare
Compute with thine, O France, his dole of tears ;
Or seek to coldly, callously compare
His petty round of passing hopes and fears
With these, the fateful fortunes of thy years ?
Thy better self, betrayed by passion blind,
Is false to even that which it endears :
Ye, yestermorn, your Cæsar's brow entwined ;
To-day, an empire's dust lies scattered to the wind !

* The bleak eminence of *Notre Dame de la Garde*, whence the view is unrivalled, and where the mariners' chapel is filled with quaint offerings from those preserved on sea and shore.

IV.

Alas, that hope should ever sleep so still !

Alas, its bloom ! alas, its swift decay !

I muse on one whose gentle tear-drops fill

The void of this her widowed life's delay.

Life hath its sunshine, even as the day,

Bright, beauteous, and bountiful, until

Light, robed in its rich crimson-gilt array,

Departs ; whereon disconsolate and chill

Life's shadow deepens round us, howsoe'er we will.

V.

Where are the knees that knelt to her estate ?

The courtier-chiefs that harmonized her praise,

To foist the flatteries which crowned them great,

Or veil the treachery which now betrays ?

Thou, that hast seen the dawn and death of days,

What pang hath sorrow to thy breast unknown,

Or tear more sad than that which dims thy gaze ?

Behold ! an Empress doth implead her own ;

And craves a château where she erewhile carved a
throne ! *

* The Empress, having won her suit against the city of Marseilles, nobly presented the château to the municipality for charitable purposes.

VI.

Time was, the sick, the suffering, knew her care,*
And torture felt the solace of her smile ;
Yea, fever found an Empress follow where
God's very light grew shadowed oftenwhile
At sight of human haunts so drear, so vile :
And now dread grief, that spares no sovereign head,
And fate, not e'en thy charms could reconcile,
Uncrown thy brow and shadow it instead
With sorrow's wreath of cypress—sacred to thy
dead.

VII.

Within that land, where thou art loved, abide ;
Where sleep thy lost, O Sorrowed, peace to thee !
Soothed by a Queen who sought her Sister's side—
Kindred by right of sorrow's sympathy.
Here, by the silence of thy southern sea,
I muse upon thy home ; and once again
Recall that twilight hour when thou to me
Wast guide amid the treasures that remain
Of him—thy memory's gladness, misery, pride, and
and pain.†

* See Note A.

† Farnborough, December, 1883.

VIII.

Adieu, Marseilles!—'twere profitless to weep
O'er the reft bosom of imperious France :
Unroused by glory, love usurps her keep ;
And, whilst coy beauty 'thralls her with a glance,
Mirth sways the feast and music speeds the dance.
See, on the mouldering sceptres of their race
Her brood of king-pretenders gaze askance :
And he, that wept to view her long disgrace,
Lies half-forgotten in his wave-washed resting-
place ! *

IX.

Farewell, ye shades of emperors and kings ;
And ye inert impassive royalties :
The mirthful melody of water sings
The prouder plaudits of the sovran seas.
The fair bark weighs her anchor, and the breeze
Inspirits her ;—as, when sweet love-breaths fan
A woman's bosom, her swift sympathies
Yearningly surge until her fond arms span
The heart for which she yields her all of love to
man.

* Gambetta ; buried at Nice, January, 1883.

X.

Breeze of the waters ! prithee let us fly
And, as twin lover-lives estranged from home,
'Neath some far heaven breathe our mutual sigh ;
Flit thitherward where the rock-fretted foam
Intones a welcome to the feet that roam :
Together tempt some far befriending shore ;
And, vigiling some star-blanch'd tower or dome,
Rhyme the remains of art they proudly store ;
Or serenade the death-dreams of the days of yore.

XI.

Thou that beheld the heroes of the past,
And the sweet poets, laurell'd by the years ;
That wept with such as sorrow overcast,
And fed their memory with tender tears ;—
Wilt thou not whisper in my wistful ears
Some olden measure stolen from long time ?
And ye, O winds, that wander 'mid the spheres,
Shall ye not bear to me some strain sublime
Caught from the echoed cadence of celestial rhyme ?

XII.

Shall we not some time 'neath the drowsy palm
Behold the sun reclining on the sea,
Awaiting eve's approach whose breast shall calm
The waste and wear of his activity?
And in the night-watch shall we sometimes be
The unknown inmates of some fond retreat
Where youth and beauty, unbetrayed by thee,
In the rich joyaunce of ripe passion meet?—
Dear hearts! tho' life be short, its loves are full as
sweet!

XIII.

Breeze! wilt thou be my maiden's messenger?
Waft her this song which now I sing to thee?
And this my kiss wilt thou not give to her
With gentle whisper that it comes from me?
And she will sigh, and blent with thine, 'twill be
Borne some time oceanward to me again,
Like fragrance of fair flowers upon the sea:
Breeze! breathe to her this last sad farewell strain;—
Thou that dost sigh to beauty, and ne'er sigh'st in
vain!

I.

Adieu ! ah bitter-sweet to me,
Dear Love, is love's good-bye !
Alas, that ever thought of thee
Should tremble on a sigh !

2.

Pale not thy cheek for love of me,
Nor let thine eye grow dim ;—
Thine exile's brave for love of thee,
So thou, for love of him.

3.

Ah, deem not that thy heart alone
Hath all the grief to bear ;—
There's not a yearning thine has known
But his doth also share :

4.

The pang—the bitter pang he feels,
Bereft of thee, mine own,
Within this summer-clime that heals
All else, save this alone :

5.

The midnights that are void of thee ;
The visions that betray ;
The tear that woos him wearily
Back to unwelcome day :

6.

The day wherein he finds thee not,
Tho' everything recalls—
Mirth, music, and the murmurous grot,
Where rhythmic water falls.

7.

Here Love consorts with solitude,
And where Love is, thou art ;
Familiar to each wistful mood
That wiles his wayward heart.

8.

'Twas sweet of yore where fountains climb
Like scattered pearls above,
With thee to lose all sense of time
Within a dream of love :

9.

And, when the twilight whelmed the day
And left but thee and me,
To wonder would the moon betray
My world, which held but thee.

10.

On me night's shadow cast no gloom—
Thine eyes uplit my lot ;
But now, e'en spring-tide's brightest bloom
Is sad where thou art not.

11.

Enough, mine own ! his star doth wile
Him onward to the main :
Yet weep not thou, it is thy *smile*
Shall woo him back again.

12.

Dear love ! he cometh that shall kiss
From thy dear lips anew
The tender misery of this—
Love's agonized adieu.

XIV.

Breeze ! that art now my love, since none save thou,
Of all I love, shall stoop at eventide
To kiss my lips, or calm mine aching brow,
Or in a measured melody confide
Our raptures to the night as on we glide.
Alas, no more their whispers wake my lays !
Remembrance claims the sigh—to thee denied ;
Yet be thou tender, since love's tribute praise,
Or grief, is all that bides, alas ! of other days.

XV.

Full oft, I ween, however well ye woo,
Mine heart shall turn, fond breeze, to one I wis :
The heart is false that is not always true
To picture that which *was* in that which *is* !
The Deep that dimples to thy dreamy kiss
Gleams, *in thy going*, its old yonder scene ;
Thus memory lapses into mirrored bliss,
When the love-phantasies that intervene,
Restore the soul to the one love they stood
between.

XVI.

But the breeze flirts and flits—a woman true !
Ye gods ! a heartless woman 's undivine !—
Unseasonable offspring of a shrew !
I could say more, but *beauty* claims a line :
There's more divinity in yon decline
That stoops, embracing Monte Carlo's bay,
Than all the women (I've got none of mine,
So I'm unprejudiced in what I say)
Could ever boast, or (what is more the point)
betray !

XVII.

'Tis but one step from Paradise to Hell :
So found the primal parents, when regret
Embittered that for which they fondly fell.
Lo, here I stand where faintly fixed is set
The merging-bounds where each domain hath
met:
Where every passion of the human breast,
Fashioned of fiends to fascinate or fret,
Degrades the soul, each stalking undistressed
In shameless shame of utter nakedness confessed :

XVIII.

The balm of hope ; the bitter of despair ;
The chill of anguish ; and the calm of fate ;
The hungry avarice that gilds its lair ;
Or, blear-eyed, dies distraught and desolate.
Here stands a prince, and there wan paupers
wait
A stolen crumb of gold wherewith to lure,
With all the vehemence of hope and hate,
Yon pillared coins that glisten back secure
The deathly hungered gleam of envy they endure.

XIX.

The rich wax richer, and the poor more poor ;
Thus swear the needy (tho' the rich deny) ;
Earth's pyramids of wealth seem scarce secure
Upreared upon earth's wistful penury :
The low exist to elevate the high,
Denied the soil, save that Death yields to such :
Sometimes methinks, the day is passing nigh
When the substrata will upheave and touch
The social corner-stones, disjointed over-much.

XX.

Swift run the wheels that in revolving bring
Brave freight of gold ; and gist of thought to him
Who is content to watch the crowds that cling
Around their fateful fascinating rim :
Here many a purse, late over-stocked, grows slim ;
There a gay pinnacle of sudden gold :
See ! chairs are turned, a froward fate to trim :*
The wheels run slow ! and human young and old
Yearn passionately 'neath a stolid front and cold.

XXI.

Here rosebud maids that have not dreamt of sin ;
And there a weary unregenerate dame
Fevered with thirst—unsated if she win,
And, if the loser,—“double on the same !”
The only sense unknown to her is—shame,
And even this were welcome to a heart
That nought beside can frenzy or inflame :
Woe ! when life's golden chalice hath no art
To charm the leaden days that wearily depart !

* The old superstition. You frequently see the unlucky rise and spin their chairs round on one leg, in an interval of play, to propitiate the Fates.

XXII.

And others—women not so over-worse ;
 But shades of true loves, sisters, cousins, aunts !
 Lest ye should ever dip into my verse
 Methinks 'twere wiser that I look askance
 Howbeit on the daintiest of France.
 This bodes no loss to such as plunge within
 The countless Gallic volumes that enhance
 The wisdom that a woman loves to win :—
 (Which wisdom's oft, like Eve's, another name for
 sin).

XXIII.

Women abandoned even of themselves ;—
 Their end is near whom they themselves deride !
 Once luxury enriched them, till their shelves,
 Labouring, groaned beneath the weight of pride:
 Long since dismantled, the last louis glide
 Where fortune covetously wills their fall.
 Mark ! from yon vacant eye the light hath died ;
 A tottering footstep echoes thro' the hall :—
 So let the curtain drop ere droops the pauper's pall !

XXIV.

It happed that one I somehow know too well
Did risk the wherewithal he had at hand ;
And, as he feared, so straightway it befell—
He brought with him from where he late did stand
Less specie than experience at command :
So thuswise was his comrade-pard a winner ;
Which same was as a jest till night-fall, and
Grim hunger warned them it was time for dinner :
Since one must dine, however one be saint or sinner.

XXV.

Then chanced a lengthy looking-up of friends
Whose blessed charity might stand a meal :
But, as old Horace saith, "affection ends
What time the lees engird the beaker's heel."*
Of luck, as liquor, this is true as steel,
Friendship is mostly vented when expressed :
There's time to feign, but scarcely time to *feel* !
And so, with heads down-drooping and distressed,
They marvel how five francs can yield two
stomachs rest.

* "Diffugiunt, cadis

Cum fæce siccatis, amici."

Odes, Book I. xxxv.

XXVI.

Ashamed to storm some comrade's well-spread
table,

They, with a ghastly levity, decry
The "Grand's" bad wine, like foxes in the fable :

Then, leaving Monte Carlo with a sigh,

They straight descend (as most befits the high
That are the heavier of heart than purse)

Till, hard by Monaco, there greets the eye
A restaurant which might, *just* might be worse ;
Whose menu, like the soul of wit, is brief and terse.

XXVII.

Here dined the twain, nor wine nor mild cigar

Did hedge that stern divinity of steak ;—

Since, howsoever poor the gentle are,

They'd liefer far their thirst with water slake

Than drain the coin the waiter yearns to take.

They "dined," and this is all that durst be said :

Better the herb that stilled their hungry ache,

Better their mirth and merriment, than fed

At stern state banquets where no jest is ever sped !

XXVIII.

Who hath not dined and thuswise been distressed,
Sad unit of sad sacrificial twelves !
Matter and mind alike are under-dressed ;
Man's homespun coat (and wit) adorns his—
shelves,
And women veil their feelings not themselves !
Behold, than such-like labourers at a meal,
I'd liefer be the labourer that delves ;
The sole true pang of nature that we *feel*
Awakes for that the menu's morrow shall reveal.

XXIX.

Sooth, little speech is shaped for little minds ;
And little blandishments for little hearts ;
And little loves, and tender little lines ;
And little moods and manners, fits and starts
To play at will the great world's little parts.
Poor is the richest banquet that hath not
At least one pair of eyes that somewhen darts
A gleam congenial to another's lot ;
Sweet as the sweets, tho' oftentimes as soon forgot.

XXX.

Riviera ! nursed on Nature's gentle breast
And richly, rarely, as a favoured child,
With sheen of bloom and silken verdure dressed :
The very winter on thy face hath smiled,
For love of thee, tender, subdued, and mild.
How exquisite thy glowing dawns of day !
How sweet the eve, when every thought is wiled
Up from the dim dusk shadows of decay
On wings of waning sunlight heavenward away !

XXXI.

How soft the night when moonbeams flood the sea ;
And waves are still, but not with callous sleep,
Nay, rather spellbound with the witchery
Of beauty—rare as ever dream did reap.
Upon the winds that wander down the steep
Is borne the strain of zither and guitar
Which, magically mingling with the deep,
Awakes its spirit—whose divine strings are
Swept by Diana's self, and silvered by her star.

XXXII.

'Tis midnight, and rare music stills the group
That Friendship summons to her fond retreat ;
Thro' the wide casements, 'neath the palms that loop
Their serried arms, the light falls soft and sweet :
Entranced we list, the while our hearts repeat
The plaintive harp's reverberating thrill,
Now swift, as if on rapture's rushing feet ;
Now calm, as breathe life's sweeter joys and still ;
Incited, soothed, or sorrowed at the minstrel's will.

XXXIII.

Invisible, as yonder wind that seems
The unembodied spirit of the spring ;
Thrilled, as a shallop breasted by the streams,
My soul is fain of flight—whose eager wing
Time keeping ever with the music's ring
Like it would rise to realms of rest afar.
Alas ! the minstrel ceases, and each string
Gleams on my vision as a golden bar
That 'prisons the sad soul within the things that are !

XXXIV.

One—well-beloved of many a sorrowing heart—
Returns not evermore where 'mid yon trees
Nevada's shadowed villa stands apart,
As one that seeks in solitude to ease
The heart's full vent of tender memories :
The spring he loved laid treasures of bloom
Upon his early dust ; and, bright on these,
Grief's dewy tear-drops glistened thro' the gloom
Of Leopold of Albany's untimely tomb.

XXXV.

The tear, O Queen ! which yields Thy heart relief
Is dear to us, and precious in the eyes
Of them that shall ungird Thee of Thy grief
Within the sunlight of immortal skies.
Thy respite shall be sweeter for Thy sighs ;
Thy welcome brighter for each shadow here ;
Thine hope more radiant for these clouds that
rise ;
Thy soul more tender for its anguish drear,
Solaced by this our love till God's love stays Thy
tear !

XXXVI.

Fair shores, adieu ! All that was thine to give
Of welcome and of friendship have I had :
Within thy springtime it was sweet to live ;—
Clear noons too calm, too easeful to be glad ;
Still nights of shade too starlit to be sad :
Ye vanish from me as a vision bright ;
But memory views thy mountains olive-clad,
Thy canopy of skies which calm time's flight,
And thy blue rim of waves that wake the land's
delight.

XXXVII.

Ah, who that views but sighs to leave thy shore ;
Counting life's summer richer for that scene
Where loving nature lavishes rare store
Of margeless blue and unmolested green ?
Like grief of lovers parted at the e'en,
The spring's swift petulance of sudden tears
Jewels the sunshine of a happier mien.
Dreamland, adieu ! Thy dim shore disappears :
The sailors sing, and thus the listening wanderer
hears :—

I.

When lost to the ladye ye woo,
Yo ho! we will teach ye to learn
If the kiss that ye kissed her was true
As hers, which your lips did return.

2.

When lost to the lass that ye love,
Yo ho! will ye venture with me
When the spirits sweep down from above,
And the devils leap up from the sea?

3.

Yo ho! for the lash of the waves;
Yo ho! for the splash of the spume;
There's no lack of white shrouds for our graves;
Nor of dirge for the mariner's tomb!

4.

Yo ho! if thy soul gently gives
Love-prayer to each tremulous breath,
The love for thy Ladye-lass lives,
A love that is stronger than death.

5.

Yo ho! should the despot restrain
The wrack of that desolate day,
In pity of love which no pain
Nor terror of death could betray :

6.

Then, as billow to billow returns,
Yo ho! tho' dissevered a space,
The heart where thy Ladye-lass yearns
Shall yet thrill to her lover's embrace.

XXXVIII.

Swift dies away the loud and lusty peal :—

Brave hearts! however sternly rough and strong,
Your very manhood teaches you to feel!

It chanced that he that sings, did learn a song
Of his own heart, as we were borne along
Caught by the winds careering on the sea :

He thought of love, and how dear love is wrong
To feed such sighs as seem not good to be
The fruit of love; and musing thus, sang, Love, of
thee :—

“ Low lies the blossom when the summer’s set :
Her truest petal shrouds the rose’s tomb !
Dear love ! my love would weep if thine should
bloom
Of over-beauty into seared regret :
Should I not curse this love that is thy fret ;
Would even turn me from the inner room
Of thy fond heart which, entering, I doom ;
If peradventure thou couldst thus forget.

Nay, but I cannot, for I am but clay ;
And thou—the spirit that dost quicken me :
How can I go that erewhile learnt of thee
This measure, echoed in my heart to-day :
‘ E’en in its bitterness love’s thrill shall be
Timed to the rhythm of love’s divinest lay ! ’ ”

XXXIX.

Athwart yon fleet that, with fair plumage furl'd,
Slumbers within its haven's broad embrace,
Lies Genoa—that gave to the New World
Birth, record, history, lineage, power, and place.
Here dreamt Colombo of a dusky race
And continents impenetrably far ;
Whither, long while denied, he turned his face,
And, wiled by hopeful courage and his star,
Possessed those shores that foam-crowned billows
bar.

XL.

España claimed what Genova decried :
Yea, alien lips revered Italia's son :
The prayer she spurned, not long for pity sighed,
Whose erewhile plaint was Isabella's pride.
But ev'n contempt applauds a victory won ;
Success—that's but a byword when denied—
Becomes an idol when it's deified :
Thus, monumental of ironic fate,
Columbus stands—crowned, honoured, and beloved
too late !

XLII.

That which the new possessed of the old shore
Returns, an ampler treasure to our keep ;—
New thought, new energy, and newer store
Of all stern hands, inured to labour, reap ;
And subtilties that wake the Old World's sleep ;
And bloom of womanhood reblossomed too,
Which we constrain athwart the treacherous
deep ;—
Since the Old World, wisting it fond and true,
Summers his heart in thine, sweet daughters of the
New !

XLII.

What memories, O city of the Past,
Frequent thy fragrant solitudes of night !
Ah ! couldst thou speak the bygone dreams thou
hast,
What forms of eld long hidden from our sight,
Returning down yon ladders of beam-light,
Would tell us of a distant world more new
Than that which wiled Colombo's seaward flight ;
Perchance would teach of God-lit regions—true
As the far realms his earthly vision yearned to view.

XLIII.

The noiseless stars illumine land and sea,
The silver night-lights of the city's sleep :
The hour is rich with tender witchery :
Breasting a by-way tortuously steep,
With the old walls I ghostly vigil keep ;
Hark! . . . To my tread they murm'rously reply
Where Echo eavesdrops 'neath the shadows
deep :—
“ Behold yon wanderer ! Prithee tell us why,
When others rest, he broods beneath the wakeful sky ?

XLIV.

“ Why stalks he like a restless spirit whom
The generous slumbers of the night forsake ?
Now, shadowlike amid congenial gloom ;
Now, flitting as a spectre o'er a lake
Across the open—whereon gleams the wake,
The lengthening wake of the fair-sailing moon ?
Robbing the breezes of the songs they make ;
And craving of yon belfry-tower the boon
Of converse with the days it summoned hence too
soon ?

* See Note B.

XLV.

“ Of thee, our visions, Genova the Great !
Mistress of seas ; and Monarch of fair shores !
The Queen invincible, inviolate,
Whose prowess—chronicled in all that stores
Record of deeds which chivalry adores—
Shall yet be sung when the emblazoned page
Turns to that dust of time which it deplores ;
Shall still be sung so long as bard or sage
Have voice to vaunt the glories of a vanished age.

XLVI.

“ Have we not erewhile from the noonday sun
Sheltered the mighty Doria as he passed
Down to the galleys which undaunted won
His State’s deliverance, and overcast
The Gallic fleet with dread infuriate blast ? *
Bides not the cypress, when its lord has gone,
To dimly darken o’er his dust at last ? †
And shall not we—his shade of life anon—
Stand shadowed where his light upon his city shone ?

* See Note C.

† “ Neque harum, quas colis, arborum,
Te, præter invisas cupressos,
Ulla brevem dominum sequetur.”

Horace, *Odes*, Bk. II. xiv.

XLVII.

“ Alas that we should see Masséna’s pride,
His fortitude, his courage desolate ! *
Famine achieved what steel could not decide :
The city Savoy could not subjugate
Surrendered to a sadder, fiercer fate.
Thus, as she lived, the old republic died,
Stern to the last, and vigorous, and great :
While we, the walls that clasped the ocean’s bride,
Still guard her dust—true as the never-ebbing tide.

XLVIII.

“ Even the ocean loves thy storied shore :—
The waters cease not watching thee, for fear
They should return to find thee there no more :
Thus are we sentinel of all that’s dear :
The love that’s truest, centres in a tear ;
Expectant, ’midst its balmiest hour of bliss,
Of some fell doom that shall like winter sear
The bloom of joy which summers ’neath Love’s kiss :
Yet is love loftier, more tender, holier in this ! ”

* See Note D.

I.

When vernal blossoms decked the year,
And woods were ripe that now are sear,
Whilst yet the valiant Genoese
Unvanquished swept the southern seas,
San Filipo with festal pride
Greeted the Count Adorno's bride—
Daughter of an illustrious line,
The fair and queenly Catherine.

2.

O beautiful the flush of bloom
Within the shrine's time-hallowed gloom ;
And gay the garlands children bore
To deck the feet they bowed before ;
And grand the organ-peals that woke
The blessings which the crowd invoke ;
But sweeter, maid, that smile of thine
Which gave Adorno Catherine.

* Catherine Fieschi, Countess Adorno, was born in the latter half of the fifteenth century.

3.

Alas that hope so fondly fair
Should ever droop in swift despair !
Alas that vow so sweetly sworn
Should scarce outlive the bridal morn !
That lip so fond should learn to rue
Its truth of love from lips untrue ;
Or ever bosom fair as thine
Should trust the false, sweet Catherine !

4

Time ! what hast thou to do with years,—
The sum of life is told in tears :
She deems it months ere one had flown
Which made Adorno's name her own ;
Swiftly as drooped the bridal bloom,
Life's gladness deepened into gloom ;
The lip did sigh, the heart did pine,
The eyes did weep of Catherine !

5.

Adorno's heart to-day possessed
By passion, priest had never blessed ;
E'en in clandestine love untrue,
The morrow's impulse thrills anew :
Nor knows he shame, that knew it known,
The wife he loves is not his own ;
Yet tenderly that heart of thine
Still yearns for him, fond Catherine !

6.

Ah, cruel as the pangs of hell
Is love unloved that loves too well ;
And sad the silent agony
That yearns upon a callous eye ;
And bitter the unheeded tear
That speaks a passion vain as dear :
Alas, alas ! all these are thine,
Ere yet a year, sweet Catherine !

7.

The Muse discovers not those nights
That curtain his debased delights ;
Nor echoes each discordant lay
That startled night and summoned day ;
Loth is the lute to jar its strings
To wake such chords as revel wrings,
Whilst ever tender as divine
Thy tears fall hot, sad Catherine !

8.

At length, aweary of her grief,
She seeks the world to win relief ;
Bids Fashion numb the heart that ne'er
Would know another gladness there ;
Danced with the midnight into morn
And wept that she grew more forlorn :
Ah me ! this age is much as thine—
Crowds jar our griefs, sweet Catherine !

9.

Thus day by day with the endeavour
To baffle love she loved for ever ;
Since e'en the effort to forget
Inspires the heart with love's regret ;
Which, mingling with each memory kept,
O'erflowed in every tear she wept :—
Yet by each rapture we resign
The heart grows sweeter, Catherine !

10.

Deserted, beautiful, and lone ;
Her soul full sore and weary grown,
Small marvel if for very grief
Her love in sin had sought relief :
Nay ! woman's heart when once betrayed
Breaks the fond chord which passion played :
Ah God ! no other hope than Thine
Can thrill the heart of Catherine.

11.

How passionlessly proud her mien
That, gracious as a gentle queen,
Reviews with sadly tender eyes
The world she cannot but despise ;
For, 'neath the pomps of life lay hid
The void her heart yet lives amid :
Alas ! beneath those smiles of thine
Thy soul is shadowed, Catherine !

12.

Lo ! when full many a year had sped,
And, in her summer-blossom's stead,
Her cheek is pale, and on her brow
The winter snow is falling now ;
Behold her as she gently stands
And soothes the sick with tender hands
Outstretched with comfortings divine,
As God hath taught thee, Catherine !

13.

Lo ! she, the beautiful and great,
To charity doth consecrate
The years that lengthen into age
Beloved and venerably sage :
Here virtue recognized her worth,
And blessed the hour that gave her birth ;
And misery forbears to pine,
That found a friend in Catherine ! *

14.

The sad and stricken humankind,—
The sick, the aged, and the blind ;
Sad lips, sad ears, and, sadder still,
Sad eyes no gracious sunbeams fill :
Wherever falls the haze of light,
The hush of sound, and all things bright ;
That ministering heart of thine
Is blest in blessing, Catherine !

* See Note E.

15.

Here, as the tomes of history tell,
She lit her solitary cell
With many a portraiture which she
Herself depicted tenderly
To image, as in life again,
The Saviour's Passion and His pain :
Whose sorrows overshadowed thine
With Godlike solace, Catherine.

16.

And learning lends its gracious aid
To celebrate her cloister's shade ;
Where many an immortal page
Redeemed an ill-reputed age :
High place among the women who
Are fair to ponder as to view
These time-worn chronicles of thine
Have won for thee, sweet Catherine ! *

* See Note F.

.

17.

'Twas oft she prayed that Heaven would give
Her lengthening days the strength to live
Adorno to behold once more,
E'en yet beloved as loved of yore ;
That, seeing her, he might depart
Forgiven of her broken heart ;
Yet, weeping, did her will resign
To God alone, sweet Catherine.

18.

One night, they woke her to attend
An aged wanderer that did wend
His weary footsteps to the door
They scarcely reached and nothing more :
Obliterated long the trace
Of manly beauty, noble grace ;
But lo ! She starts ! fond arms entwine
The life-lost love of Catherine !

19.

With tears he told how soon time chills
The heart which only passion thrills ;
How soon the laughter leaves the eyes
Which lust endears and deifies ;
How, swiftly as an April shower,
Tears blind the raptures of an hour ;
Thus, as her arms around him twine,
Adorno sighs to Catherine.

20.

Thus, on the bosom he betrayed
Adorno wept, Adorno prayed ;
And Heav'n, that haply led him there,
Was e'en as gracious to his prayer
When, mutually loved and dear,
Death closed his eye on sorrow's tear ;
Whose smile unshadowed shall be thine
In brighter climes, sweet Catherine !

XLIX.

I stand in Genova. The soft spring air
 Sighs on the balmy blossoms at the base
 Of these still cloistered corridors that share
 The slumbrous dead's unwakeful resting-place.
 I tread the galleries whose marbles grace
 The life, the lineage, or the love of those
 Whom ruthless Death miscarried in mid-race :—
 Alas, nor sculptor's wile, nor mourner's woes
 Can woo the sepulchre from its unwaked repose !

L.

Thousands of weird memorials of the dead ;
 Acres of soil life's sorrows consecrate ;
 Proud tombs where never tear of grief is shed,
 Nor flush of blossom warms their frigid state :
 But here and there, unseasonably late,
 A snowdrop bides as loth to disappear—
 Beloved of tender hands that on it wait—
 Weeping what time it droops o'er dust long dear
 Sweet morning dews, shed silent as a seraph's tear !

LI.

How shall we doubt of Death that do behold
His faithful servitor whose name is—Life ?
What tho' we live ? we never live too old
To bow the head and yield the laboured strife ;
Nor yet too young, but Death, the same, is rife
With that which withers this material bloom—
Or fret or fever or foul pruning-knife
Of sudden murder, culls us for the doom
Or dream of death which waits us in the silent tomb.

LII.

Some wanderers, such as he that sings this land
Wiled by the restless glimmer of his star,
Deem themselves lost to the stern king's demand :
Fools ! howsoever fleet, full swifter far
The silent wheels of Death's triumphal car :
How know we that we wander not to meet,
Midway upon our journey, that grim bar
Which casts its sudden shadow on the feet,
However life be sunny, or these far lands sweet !

LIII.

Alas for death that hath no deathless hope !
Alas for life unlit by living trust !
Deem ye the soul shall slumber when the slope
Engulfs life's desolated dream of dust ?
I feel within me that which lives, and must !
Sometimes my spirit, in the silent night,
Speeds where the dreams of gentle days are *just*,
Withholding not the loves of our delight
As here their blossoms wither with untimely blight.

LIV.

He knows not life that knows not of its end :
Think ye we learn not somewhat as we stand
Where the fond love of years—wife, sister, friend—
Droops, with faint pressure of love-fondled hand,
Into the God-light of the Yonder land ?
May not the lustre of that last smile be
The soul's first message from the spirit-band
To soothe our heart's dim-shadowed misery,
Like sheen of summer starlight on the sullen sea ?

LV.

One that bequeathed this book wherein I heap
The many thoughts I glean from many climes,*
By such-like waters slumbers in still sleep
Lulled, since he loved them, by sweet ocean-
chimes :
Whom, also, he did love must needs betimes,
With swelling bosom and half-surging tear,
Ring out a tender requiem of rhymes.
Ah ! didst thou live, kind friend, he need not fear
Tho' all deny the bard, *one* holds his lyric dear !

LVI.

Full well remembered, how from infancy
Thy hand enriched his slender bloom of good ;
Wiling with strength of manly sympathy
The little soul from its own solitude.
Sweet is the sunlight of a kindred mood !
Seems not the ray that kindles friendship's breast
A life-reflection of love's interlude ?
What tho' it lack love's more impassioned zest,—
None can be great nor good whom never friend
hath blessed !

* His note-book in life, now mine, till death :—
Would that the Dead could speak !

LVII.

Less seeking, than besought-of, rest well earned,
He slumbers sooth a sweeter sleep than these
That claim the pomp of heraldry he spurned :
His memory lives not in a sculptor's fees ;
No mock of mausolean obsequies
Demeans his memory as yon tombs impart
Ideal honour to dead Genoese :—
Would that they yielded such to poor dead Art ;
Or even touched—thrilled—typified the living heart

LVIII.

Behold art's bathos !—On a noble grave
(Where rest the ashes of a nobler race)
Angled of form and agonized of face
A harpist sits and chants a requiem-stave :
Small marvel the dead nobles 'neath the base
Loose not the lid—encumbered with his weight !
Better the seraph slid from off a space,
Giving the worthies just the chance of fate
To break the dull monotony of marble state !

LIX.

And,—sacrilege of art!—another tomb
Displays an image of the Holy Son
Throned 'gainst the very door, as if to doom
That future Life for which *His* tomb was won.
Of all this noble family sooth none
Receive the invitation to draw near :—
A diplomatic sculptor needs must shun
All fancy situations when, as here,
They'd have no fascination (leastways for a Peer).

LX.

But, O Alcardi, Scanzi, let me not
Defame your power nor Fabiani's skill,
Tho' spite of words they still were unforgot.
Would that such seraphs as ye wake at will
Now trod these Earth-walks when the shades
droop chill
'Neath the dim fruitless branches of despair,
That their bright visible warmth of joy might fill
Our hearts with gentle imagings and rare
Of such—the soul's sweet wingèd sisters of the Air!

LXI.

Oft in the flutter of the winds by night,
Ere yet the pauses of their dreamy ease,
It were not difficult to deem a flight
Of seraphs sought the drowsy forest-trees :
What tho' we view them not, our reveries
Seem sympathetically blent with theirs :
Yea, and full oft our midnight melodies
Do emulously seem to catch the airs
Of seraph-song and hymn them—sweetly unawares.

LXII.

Here infant hands rich bloom of roses bring ;—
“ Beati mortui ! ” Happiest thus portrayed
Bright with the blossoms of eternal spring !
Mark ye the joyous features of yon maid,
By angel-envoys summoned from the shade
To the far dome of day ? Her virgin flight
Yields the delights for which her death-dream
prayed.*

Here tender Art with gracious, gentle sight
Piercing the dusk of death, visions the dawn of light.

* One of the most charming groups in the Campo Santo, by Fabiani, representing the flight of a maiden from her tomb.

Over the clustering blossoms of the spring,
Behold how trips yon gentle little maid :
God's smile gleams ever sweetest thro' death's
shade

On these—the little ones He doth home-bring :
Scarce bend the flowers beneath her steps, nor fling
Aside the teardrops which the night hath laid,
As sorrow doth, upon the loves that fade ;—
As these shall fade, for all their blossoming !

Five innocent years, the sunny dawn of life ;
And now, this tender flower-strewn path of death
Whose garlands feel, as she, the pruning-knife
Yet breathe, the same, a still diviner breath :
Sweet is the spring, that waneth blossom-rife,
And youth, God-loved ; which God's love garnereth !

* A most beautiful statuette by Scanzi, representing a little girl tripping heavenward over clusters of bloom. The marble blossoms are exquisitely executed.

1.

Little maiden blossom-laden,
Prithee tell me whither bound ?
Dims no sorrow the to-morrow
That thine infant soul hath found ?

2.

Sunny hours, vernal flowers
Beautify the bourn you cross :
Shadows dreary, hearts aweary,
Shade the home that mourns thy loss.

3.

Earth, unknowing of thy going,
Stablished not thy silent feet ;—
Never fear thee ! seraphs hear thee,
And shall bear thee onward, Sweet !

4.

Little maiden blossom-laden,
Whom God summons in youth's morn,
Tread the roses He uncloses,
We that linger press the *thorn*.

* Ada C——, aged five years ; buried in the Campo Santo.
See preceding page (note).

LXIII.

But gentle friendship wiles my truant heart
Back to the happier haunts of living men.
'Tis sweet in solitude to muse apart :
More sweet in this, since ever tenderest then
The voice of friendship woos us back again.
Ah ye, that wean me from the lingering day,
Remembrance unrestrained, shall linger when
She vieweth (as, alas ! she only may)
The friends of this my erewhile solitary way.

LXIV.

Shall she not say to you :—Remember ye
When, birdlike, the returning eventide
Spread her dusk pinions o'er the drowsy sea,
And her still bosom glistened—beautified
With sheen of pink and amber ; and her side,
Beneath the wings, was clouded silver-white ;
And we stood looking thro' a casement wide
Wherefrom sweet strains of melody took flight,
Chasing each other downward to the dreamy night ?

LXV.

Not evermore shall he who sings forget
The kindly welcomes of that fond retreat
From which, what time soft music was sweet set,
He seemed to wander upon wingèd feet
Across the sea where earth and heaven meet,
And the Past shapes the days that have not been :
Whereon he looked and, listing strains so sweet,
What marvel that he museth :—" It is e'en
Music, not only heard, methinks, but even *seen* ! " *

LXVI.

Now all is changed. Unfriended and unknown
He stands in Pisa, where swift Arno's stream
Reflects his form, but mirrors it *alone*.
Above him the grim city turrets gleam,
And, in the stillness of the midnight, seem
Time's sentinels that keep Time's solitude !
River ! like thee the poets, wending, dream ;
And, dreaming, seek some life-lost interlude
By memory beloved and tenderly re-viewed !

* See Note G.

LXVII.

Wonder, amongst the works that men create,
The Tower of Pisa to my distant sight
Leans on the shadowed shoulders of the night,
As one must lean—however one be great !*
Full easy some, inclining from the right,
Stand honoured in this unregenerate day :
Yon, being marble, can afford it quite ;
As sinners of consideration may,
That were effaced for safety, were they common clay.

LXVIII.

Within their Campo Santo they have raised
A statue 'clept the *Inconsolable*,
Which as a work of art is vastly praised ;
It made, I ween, my vein of humour swell
Since, being nigh distraught with grief and—well,
Not over clothed upon, remembereth yet
(Forgetting *what*, it boots me not to tell)
That which a woman never can forget,
And to the last most dearly loves—her coronet !

* See Note H.

LXIX.

When first I saw thee, Florence, the dense snow
Draped, mantle-wise, thy domes and turrets grey :
And the lone wind that wooed thee long ago
Moaned, as a mourner, o'er thy buried clay :
What tho' thy sceptre long hath passed away,
Bereft of grandeur still thy days are great :
Sovereign by right of thy soul's innate sway,
Misfortune cannot leave thee desolate :—
The storied mind will triumph o'er relentless fate !

LXX.

In vassalage, thy treasures we view :—
The bloom of years Time consecrates for them
That reverence the beautiful and true :
We render homage,—kissing the pure hem
Of art's dim drapery ; and note each gem
Enshrined by thee—her gentle sister-queen
And sweet custodian of her diadem ;—
A thankless task, since oftentimes, I ween,
Crowds desecrate the sanctity thou'rt fain to screen.

LXXI.

Here many a bard beloved, dear Muse, of thee
Ennobled Arno's emulating stream,
Whose eddying rivulets rehearse to me
Such rhythmic minstrelsies as ever seem
Re-echoed from some old-world poet's dream :
Where dwelt the great 'tis haply well to brood :
Nor lacks there here material for a theme
To charm reflection with congenial food ;
Or thought, that in strange climes finds sweetest
solitude.

LXXII.

How worn yon city ! Even Arno's tide
Ebbs with the Æons, evergreen with age :
The self-same stream which Hannibal defied—
Impeded not, for all its swollen pride :
Here lingered Harold on his pilgrimage :
And here the Muse's last-loved woman-child
Found in her soul that power her strength denied :
Waking her lute as one erewhile beguiled
With echoes of that land where she too soon was
wiled ! *

* Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

LXXIII.

O cruel kind, O bitter sweet was he
From whom 'tis fabled that the bards descend.
O thou, their sire, how was it well of thee
Tourney of passions in one brain to blend,—
Thine offspring's foe that fain had been their
friend !
How must thou weep that viewest with regret
The oft despair wherein their yearnings end ;
Immortal aims pursued with mortal fret ;
Song, sometime silenced ere their sweetest strains
are set !

LXXIV.

Ah God, he need not weep! They weep themselves
On whom the Muse's pall-like mantle falls :
It were not hard to summon from our shelves
Tomes in whose verse the soul of pity calls :
Vain is the sympathy which death forestalls !
Their lonely immortality of grief
Finds rest and recompense in ampler halls :
Calm is the flood, and Charon's voyage is brief :—
They have not lived in vain that welcome death's
relief !

LXXV.

Such, on this spot, have lived, and sighed, and sung!

Peace be to Dante's dust, and Dante's dreams!

Italia woke the heart of hearts she wrung;

As winter chills, but cannot quench, the beams,

So sternly shone his soul's celestial gleams.

Shades of the poets! is my song untrue?—

'Tis only now that Dante's city deems

Him worth yon marble—hideous as new,

And cold as were their hearts that long withheld his
due.

LXXVI.

Six centuries of years, and this his home

Upreared no meet memorial to his fame:

His restful dust, 'neath proud Ravenna's dome,

Is loved by such as fed his living fame

And comforted the bard they could not claim.

Too late, alas! when his sad soul had fled,

Yon marble mourner, to his city's shame,

Droops o'er the treasured pages (which instead
Of vainly cherishing 'twere better that she read!).*

* See Note I.

LXXVII.

And this, her marble sister, clasps a crown—
A poet's laurel, twined for Dante's brow,—
But lo! her hand droops limp and nerveless down
Nor doth essay to proffer it, I trow,
To him,—bent low as only grief can bow!
What tho' Time's halls re-echo Dante's name?
Mark the late honour Florence yields him now,
This crude misshaped memorial to his fame,
His loneliness, his love, and her undying shame!

LXXVIII.

Tho' long-contemned, true genius triumphs late;
And bathos lays the laurel at its feet:
The parasites that pander to the great,
By every platitude their lips repeat,
Betray the littleness that deems it sweet.
He needs no praise who labours not for fame!
Can honour plume the soul which is complete?
Or man's applause, more venal than man's blame,
By statues deify a never-dying name?

LXXIX.

The world is full of little lesser-lights ;
And genius (leastways that we recognize)
Is double-damned by daring proselytes :
Inhaling secondhand his Master's sighs,
This, by long posing with dull dreamy eyes,
Essays to advertise the verse he writes ;
Whilst that, declaims the idyl he indites :
Sooth, genius needs be strong that never dies
In birth of its own brood of vapid votaries !

LXXX.

China and chintz and chairs of Chippendale,
And shapes of women more burlesqued than
decked,
And youths with visages divinely pale
Pose—representative of intellect :
Mind illustrates its strength in Matter wrecked :
Urged by *high* art, our very waists ascend,—
Like love, more lengthy when it's incorrect !
“ There's nothing new ”—as Solomon hath penned—
Save pedigrees and poets. (Hope I don't offend !)

LXXXI.

Nay, since we need renaissance, let us breathe
New life into old manners and old modes ;
Let such, as purer centuries did wreath
For noble manliness, inspire our odes
Instead of aught a Pickford's van unloads !
If the antique be necess'ry to Art
Let olden *style* reclaim our tufts and toads ;
Retune the elder lutes that did impart
Harmonious numbers less of hardware than of heart.

LXXXII.

Good masters ! hold your teapot 'fore mine eyes
That I may learn to elevate my theme :
But brew me first of that which it supplies ;—
I take it strong, one lump of sweet, and cream :
What time fair Cynthia's sympathetic beam
Consoles the hour which love and bards distract :
But soothly, masters ! an it civil seem
I durst exclaim (that have remarked the fact)—
"O well ye live up to your china ;—and it's cracked !"

LXXXIII.

In very truth, if life's a vale of tears
Satire and laughter crown each guardian height :
Yet none too jestingly for gentle ears
'Twere well to sing a strain now sad now bright,
As things seem lit or shadowed to the sight :
There's more of beauty in this world of ours,
Yea, more things exquisite with shade and light
Than we do image even darkly—flowers,
Sea, Nature, human love! these deck a poet's
bowers ;

LXXXIV.

Where, frequent in soul-solitude, he seems
By gentle ministering spirits blest :
Companioning his lonely life with dreams,
They harmonize his weary heart's unrest.
Think ye that such calm joys, or thine, are best ?
His, that completes the aim (so be he can
Ere death assuage the yearnings of the breast)
To soothe, to solace, to ennoble Man,
And raise the drooping soul to its celestial span :

Think ye it costs him nothing so to sing?
'Tis not his song, it is his soul ye mar
When scorn or envy's ruthless fingers jar
Chords which the Muse not all disdains to ring :
Yet blame bestows what never praise can bring—
A loftier courage, since the griefs that are,
Seem but the mists whose halo crowns his star :—
'Tis sorrow wakes the poet's sweetest string !

Soothed by that richest recompense of Song,
The guerdon-gladness its own blending gave,
He breasts the scorn which every bard must brave :
Yet, peradventure, be it short or long,
He wins the day who dares redeem its wrong,
Crowned with the wreath he never stooped to crave.

LXXXV.

Rome ! erewhile mistress of a vassal world,
How shall I sing thy centuries of fate,
Thy pride of sovereignty, thy pomp of state :
Or tell in song of Cæsar's banner furled
O'er the dead dust of them that crowned thee
Great ?
Alas ! thou hast no future of renown,
Nor hope on which thy wearied heart can wait :
The world is dark to him that looketh down,
As thou, that seekest 'mid the dust thy riven crown !

LXXXVI.

How shall I sing, that, seeing thee, must sigh ;
Or wake the lute which, silent, sorrows too ?
A thousand memories invoke the eye
That gazes on thee, Rome !—And yet, ah who
Would dare to sweep the olden strings anew,
Which other hands more skilled of song than mine
Awoke to lyric utterance fond and true !
Bid me not, Muse !, to sing this spot divine,—
Only its reverence is ours—its lute is thine !

LXXXVII.

Thus saith the Muse :—" He that would fain sing
well

Seeks not to emulate some richer lyre :
True is the chord which is content to tell
That which the voices of the soul inspire.
Thou standest o'er the ruined funeral-pyre
Of such as were, and now, alas ! are not :
Say, hath thy lute no strain it would desire
To echo clearly, tho' it be forgot,
Amid the shadows of this immemorial spot ? '

LXXXVIII.

The voice that's tender, seldom is untrue :—
Well hast thou spoken, Muse ! I needs must sing
Tho' the hand tremble as it sweeps the string,
And hath not save some olden chord to ring :
'Tis good we strive not alway for *the new* ;
' Tho' grand the fount, we rest not where it flows,
But where, becalmed, it mirrors heaven's hue :
Man craves not alway novelty—he knows
The sweets of life are ever sweetest in repose.

LXXXIX.

Ye winds ! that breathed the old world's dying sigh,
Have ye no whisper for my silent string ?
My lute shall list, what time ye wander by,
And steal the melody she yearns to ring :
Sweet are the woven symphonies ye sing,
Sweet with the blended joys and griefs of Time ;
The Muse herself is not so swift of wing
As ye, O winds ! of heaven-born flights sublime
That woo the years,—the Muse's ministers of rhyme !

XC.

Down from the Capitol I gaze on Rome,
Upon the Forum, and the Appian Way ;
Bright is yon sun upon their cold decay :
And beautiful, athwart St. Peter's dome ;
And gay, across the gilding of Saint Paul's ;
And sweet, atween the Coliseum walls
Like chastened maze of silver tracery :—
Here mayst thou meet the mighty Past that calls
The soul, its stern cold majesty of mien enthalls.

XC I.

Bright orb! how strange that this sweet selfsame
beam

Gleamed on yon spot when sovran Cæsar died :
Alas! that ebbing sanguinary stream,
Warm drop by drop, was nothing to the tide
Of tears which flowed for Cæsar's wars world-
wide !

Who that hath watched an orphan's piteous tear,
Or marked the anguish of a widowed bride,
But would not deem a vanquished world full dear
At cost of pang so bitter and of grief so drear ?

XC II.

Proud, passionate, imperious, depraved—

These serried stages drained of soul and breath,
The city which a hundred heroes saved :

Rome great in life, is Rome more grand in death ;—
There seems a voice that from her ruins saith :—
“ In me! in me—proud Forum of the past—

Rome's grace, not Rome's debasement lingereth ;
Thus shalt thou view, Time's passions overcast,
Th' imperishable soul of beauty crowned at last !”

XCIII.

Ye silent stones ! what wonders ye have seen !
Rome the undaunted ; Rome the desolate ;
Rome, mistress of all marvels that have been,
Beloved of time—spite of the old world's hate,
Crowned for all centuries Old Rome the Great !
Let me awhile play truant from these days,
To stand with thee and thine within the gate
What time slow Fabius earns thy fitful praise,
Or Scipio sears the Carthaginian's crown of bays.

XCIV.

See ! how the mourners wander down the street :—*
Alas ! the warrior returns no more
To open with the echo of his feet
The ready latchings of the homestead door !
Never around the dead may sorrow store
Tribute of love, of piety, of woe :
Nay, for Rome's heroes slumber 'neath the shore
Of distant blood-red Trasimene, and so
Find the sole rest a vanquished Roman deigns to
know.

* See Note J.

XCV.

The Tiber, unmolested, wends amid
The Eternal City—winding to delay
Its swift departure ; oftentimes nigh hid
'Neath jutting buttresses—timeworn and grey
With wearing out their mediæval day ;
Unbosomed now, as maiden gala-bent,
It seeks St. Peter's shrine upon its way,
Bending with a most Catholic descent,
To bear its mirrored Cross, and vanish well-content.

XCVI.

Let others sing, if such there be that dare ;
For me, I sing not of St. Peter's fane :
A master-spirit woke an echo there,
And such-like wake not evermore again !*
In sooth, O Bard ! thine was a wondrous strain ;—
Worthy of that for which thy harp was strung :
Where thou hast been we know our voices vain,
And hush the song that else our lips had sung,
To list the thrilling chords thy master hand hath
rung !

* Byron.

XCVII.

Rome, Rome! to view thee I have travelled leagues;
One line describes thee e'en as well as reams—
Poverty, Splendour, Piety, Intrigues.
Thy strength is sapped by mediæval dreams :
The mind of Pope, priest, peer and people teems
With that it might, could, would, yet doth not, do :
Lo, scarce a soul but peradventure deems
He might be better (I believe it too).
Meanwhile as Old Rome fell a king usurps the New.

XCVIII.

As when the living soul of life hath sped,
Time is its shadow wills to re-appear ;
So thou—sad spectral semblance of the dead—
Reft of thine olden grandeur year by year,
Dost linger darkened, desolate, and drear.
By youth's swift passions is thine age effete ;
Time judges thee, nor is thy record clear—
Treasure of life and blood and all things sweet
Trophied before thy throne and trampled 'neath
thy feet !

XCIX.

'Tis morning, and the clock is chiming eight ;
And I am dight as for a dining-room.
Within a chariot careered in state
The nonce, a secret'ry or body-groom
Or emissary general, I wait
Upon a certain Dignitary great :
Thro' rain and mist the Vatican doth loom
On such as hasten to assist the fête
That caps the Cardinals erst known as "Designate:"

C.

The papal Guard—more gorgeous than I weened—
Adds that of colour which the Diplomats
And Roman demoiselles have left ungleaned :
A splendid sight this blessing of the Hats !
(In a stray moment that once intervened
I muchly mused and marvelled: "Who on earth
Hallowed the hat 'neath which Saint Peter
screened ?"
I slew the speculation at the birth,
But spared the inference—take it for what it's
worth !)

CI.

A sudden hush ! a stillness of the air !

The glittering throng bends downward to the knees ;
The Holy Father blesses from the chair

In which they bear him to his votaries :

Features benign and dignified one sees
That friends might love, and even foes befriend.

Such the possessor of the Sacred Keys
Appeared to one that, being there, did bend :—
“Prithee ! an old man’s blessing scarcely need
offend.” *

CII.

And some did stand ; and one did standing hiss !

Britannia ! blush ! he was a son of thine !

Lo, has our chivalry declined to this ?

Enough !—base birth, or lunacy, or wine

Has won its worth—however poor the line.

Yet, ere oblivion claim him (well it may !),

I prithee tell me, countryman of mine,
What Christian catechism bids thee stay
To stand in churlish scorn where others kneeling
pray ?

* Pio Nono’s words to a “lady” who sought the Vatican but remained standing during the papal benediction.

CIII.

The Hats are blessed, and to another shrine
The two new Cardinals retreat apace,
The while the Sacred Brotherhood consign
Each neophyte an osculant embrace.
The feel of a man's kisses on my face
Were dear at twice ten thousand hats of red ;
Who that has known a woman's tender grace
Could bear enact this comedy instead ?—
But Cardinals (we hope) are not thus comforted !

CIV.

That which I view I sing. These poesies
Are fact, not fiction. Yet a little time,
Give but the Muse some seasonable ease,
And she'll indite a novelette in rhyme :
Meanwhile, these stanzas, failing the sublime,
Would be sincere ; and, be it this or that,
He deems it notable that views this clime—
Crowns have not the monopoly thereat,
Full oft, uneasy lies the head that wears the—Hat.

CV.

Men never are, when woman is, *at home* ;—

That earthly paradise of tea and tattle,
Scandal and satire, flirting, fume, and foam
Of Christians herding like so many cattle :

One man to give a dozen women battle ;
(By numbers saved—he cannot marry all)

But, when the talk o'erwhelms the tea-tray's rattle,
Lord help him if, hard hemmed against the wall,
One fair antagonist determine on his fall !

CVI.

Within the Story Studios at Rome

Much proudly privileged I do attend
A very wondrously devised *at home*.

I cannot for the life of me portend
What in me lieth that should recommend
Myself commingled with the magic group :—

Sardanapalus finds in Saul a friend ;*
And Homer, Horace, Heber, form a troupe
Whose blended poesies set all the room a-whoop !

* Sardanapalus and Saul are an excellent, though unintentional, pair. Both seated, and both above life-size.

CVII.

Here Cleopatra claims a truant sigh
 (When we're assured friend Anthony is out),
Yet can I see his absence in her eye
 That dreamily and listless scorns the rout :
 Whereon, like some late jail-bird on the tout,
I seek dear philanthropic Mrs. Fry,
 Who reads a psalm till deafened by a shout
Of "Yankee Doodle" from a Northern nigh
That's chaffing Joseph (Mrs. Potiphar's hard by) ;

CVIII.

Here, Byron, Keats, absorbed in reveries ;
 And an Æsthete or two (in yellow plaster) ;
And a dear maid, for whom the marriage-fees
 Were cheap (I very, *very* nearly asked her).*
 Each chair (like Pollux) hath a marble Castor,
Where pose a multitude of mother's sons
 And daughters—slow and medium and faster.
The World is here—at least, her cognate ones ;
From Balaam's speaking ass to Bradlaugh (Albion's).

* Salome.

CIX.

See ! 'mid the throng Salome broods apart
As some sweet minister of pure intent
Whose lip forbears to liberate her heart
For very fear of yielding to the vent
Of the full tide of thought within it pent :
Sooth ! she is woman saving but for speech !
(*Hamlet* without the prince :—Her monument
Is false to nature that makes woman teach
Silence—that one sole virtue women never reach.)

CX.

Thou needest not the tribute of my praise,
Yet take it, fair Salome ! it is thine.
I gaze upon thee as the sunlight plays
Upon thy clear-cut features' perfect line :
Pensive thou sittest 'mid the day's decline,
As they that love aye sit and ponder too :
If one thus sweet would brood for love of mine,
The lute should wake to minstrelsy anew,
As thus it woke of yore for one as fond and true :—

1.

It is not the glimmer of love in thine eyes,
Nor the passionate surge of thy breast,
Nor the eloquent yearnings that sweeten thy sighs
That prove what thy lips have confessed ;

2.

It is not thy hand that now fevered, now chill,
Betrays thy fond soul as we part,—
'Tis thy sigh that ebbs listlessly, dreamily still
As I covertly watch thee, dear heart !

3.

The breeze, when it trysts with the ocean, inspires
A dimple as rich as thine own ;
But the beam of its beauty as sadly expires,
Like thine, when bereft and alone.

4.

Ah ! sad are the shades the sea mirrors, and drear,
That imaged so lately the skies :
But each cloud like thine own hath a tremulous tear
That softens love's sorrowing eyes !

CXI.

Oft in the eventide, when light ebbs low,
 Dreamily drifting on the crimson wings
Of the day-weary clouds that nightwards go,
 Dreams of the destiny of love, and things
 Indissolubly dear to ponderings
Of the young heart of love, wake one by one
 The slumbering chords dear memory sweetly
 strings :
And oft, as now, ere twilight hath begun ;—
Aglow with the swift splendour of the setting sun.

CXII.

Sweet Heliodora ! thou dost love, I know ;
 And him thou lovest is full far away.
Thine eye betrayeth thee,—maids brood not so
 Save love himself shadows his own dear ray.
 Thou dreamest never of life's chill decay ;
Yet in thy gaze there droops a dreamlike pain,
 And visionary voices seem to say :
“ He cometh not ! yet till he come again
Sorrow of love is sweet, dear love ! yea, sweet as
 vain !

“Doth my love shadow him, that fain would ray
A gentle wreath of sunlight on his brow?
Why tarries he dissevered from me now
That smiled to greet me only yesterday?
Alas, dear love, for this our love’s delay!
This bosom yearns, where thou so late didst bow;
And this heart thrills;—yet by its grief I trow
Love’s truest chords are those love’s pangs betray!”

Ah, gentle maiden! thou art all too fair
For love’s regret, or love’s more sad despair:
Thine eye shall glisten brighter for its tear!
Heaven’s treasures of sunlight wreath thy hair,
Whose shadow dims thy brow. Thus ever here
Love’s dimmest shade betrays love’s brightest
sphere.

* A charming statuette by Waldo Story. The sculptor has admirably succeeded in catching that most difficult of expressions, the love-musings of a pure maiden.

CXIII.

In truth the heritage of greatness seems,
O Italy, a burden hard to bear :
God garlands thee with beauty, and His beams
In lavishment enrich thy gardens rare,
Till even winter warms to passion there :
Blossom of nature and of art thou hast ;
Despite of man thou art divinely fair :
O hapless land ! what demon bids thee blast
With these dull barren years the promise of thy past?

CXIV.

Afar lies Naples, wooed by ocean's smile,
(Sweet as love's first unto a lover's eye),
Dimpled by Capri's dreamy little isle,
And gemmed 'mid all that e'er could deify
Scene rich as rests beneath a southern sky :
Fair Naples ! forest, mountain, land and sea,
The deeps of blue that o'er and 'neath thee lie,
Enshrine thy beauty—O, if such things be,
Methinks a poet's dream lives realized in thee !

CXV.

Lo! as a woman fair of form and face
Constrains our love what time one knoweth not
Her soul irreparably lost and base,
So Naples wiles us from the sea-girt spot
Where throned she sits as siren in a grot,
Smiling upon the waves that kiss her feet ;—
A dream of beauty nevermore forgot.
Here rest content, and call her chaste and sweet ;
Terms none more intimate can truthfully repeat.

CXVI.

Cradled in crime, in infamy and vice,
What new delight is thine, frail Napoli ?
O passion-spent ! what hast thou to entice
Thine age of languishing satiety ?
That which it could the old world left to thee,
And in the heritage thou art debased ;
Heir less of Italy's nobility,
Less of her fame, her freedom—long effaced,
Than of the lust wherewith her grandeur was disgraced.

CXVII.

The laboured offspring of all time and art,
 Spoil of the ancients storied in thy keep
Avail not to ennoble thy dull heart
 Or thrill the dreams of thine inglorious sleep :
 Where Psyche stands in meditation deep,
O soulless Napoli ! hast thou alone
 Of all the wondering world no tear to weep
For thine own littleness before the throne
Of peerless womanhood immortalized in stone? *

CXVIII.

O Dissolute ! small marvel thou art weak ;
 O Passion-bound in lust's captivity,
Small marvel that the Oscan, Goth, and Greek,
 The Roman, the Byzantine trampled thee
 Beneath the iron heel of victory :
Small marvel never emperor nor king
 Could rousing goad into activity
The sluggard heart that slumbered 'neath the string
Tuned by the muse for Virgil's rhythmic hand to
 ring.†

* See Note K.

† See Note L.

CXIX.

Along the squalid suburbs which defile
The undulating beauty of the bay,
Passing each densely populated mile,
We scale at last the steep laborious way
O'er which Vesuvius darkens grim and grey :
Here triumphs Desolation ! here his throne
Upreared on ruin, whereon day by day
Shadowed and summerless he reigns alone,
Rimmed by a winter-waste of bleak and barren stone.

CXX.

O God ! what very pangs of heart are here :
The worn, torn heart of nature in her throes !
Lo ! for all time is petrified the tear
Of nature's agony, of nature's woes :
Here never fragrant bloom of summer blows,
Nor breath of odour sweetens the sad scene ;
Nor ever tree in shapely grandeur grows ;
Nor verdure girds with modest garb of green
The naked steeps dismantled by the despot's spleen.

CXXI.

Canst thou not image that accursed night
When, 'mid the travail and the throes of Earth
And anguish tremulous of fear and fright,
New fiends are born in bitterness of birth
Whose heritage is darkness, death, and dearth.*
See ! never sun arises on the day ;
Nor is there sound of melody and mirth ;
Nor gleam of light save in the lurid play
Of yon volcano's ruthlessly impassioned ray.

CXXII.

The earth seems opened to man's frenzied sight,
Wherefrom the buried of all human wrong
Burst the black sepulchres of timeless night,
Leaping, with pæans strenuous and strong,
Upon the tomb that held them voiceless long :
From yon deep pit of fire the fiends have hurled
Destruction on the land ; and, as they throng,
The Furies with swift tempest-bolts unfurled,
Launched down the seething floods of death, would
sweep the world.

* August 24th, A.D. 79. The succeeding days were as night, the sun being completely invisible owing to the dense showers of ashes.

Let me not worship youth and beauty more,
 'Tis age inspires the poet's reveries !
 Thus ponders he that wanders over these
Thy streets, Pompeii ! meditating o'er
The voiceless footprints of the days of yore :
 As one that broods amid old memories,
 Courting the solitude of dreamy seas,
Silent, thou standest by the southern shore :

O mighty Past ! thy shadow fills my soul !
 Shades of dim splendour, phantoms of dead pride,
 Ghosts of dumb gladness, 'mid thy ruins glide !
Here, where the Æon's ever-onward roll
 Shadows the city like a staining tide,
Spellbound, I yield me to thy strong control.

CXXIII.

O mighty Past! by what strange subtle power
Dost thou constrain the homage of mine heart ;
That rapt throughout the radiant noonday hour
Is well content to linger where thou art ?
I know thee well, that some time shall depart
Unto thy solitudes and silent shore :
Where, by Time's sickle and Death's flaming dart,
Thou hast the dust of dead hope for thy store ;
And withered bloom of life and love for evermore.

CXXIV.

I live within the future : yea, I live
To plant my feet upon an ampler height,
Where all that to the passing year I give
Of stedfast aim and effort shall requite
Life's riper years of youth's forsworn delight :
But thou, O Past! towards whom my moments wend
Warm with my breath and with my gladness bright,
Art unto me the counsellor and friend
That shapest Time and seest what it shall portend.

CXXV.

Within thine archives I have learnt of thee
How small a thing is life, how vain, how brief :—
A few fleet years, which thou shalt claim of me
Sunned by swift joy or shadowed by slow grief :
Have marked the easeful shades that yield relief
To them betrayed of thee, relentless Time !
Who, tho' long served, long followed as a chief,
Delays not e'en to list the requiem-chime
That tolls another victim to thy march sublime.

CXXVI.

O gracious Past ! unbind not nor release
The fiends that bid us falter or despond,
But in their stead, sweet ministers of peace
Whose spell shall circle memory in a bond
Of all we hold most treasured and most fond :
Loose never spectral sadness nor despair ;
Nor such as cloud the days that lie beyond ;
For life is richer for a hope that's rare ;
And death, less desolate that crowns a purpose fair.

CXXVII.

I've viewed the Coliseum, Pantheon,
The Forum, and Rome's ancient temples grey—
Revered mementoes of an era gone ;
But that weird charm which consecrates decay
A modern growth of marble scorns away.
But thou, Pompeii ! hast for company
Naught save the solitude which is thy stay ;
Naught save the voices of the wind and sea,
And God's fair light that never spurns Earth's
misery.

CXXVIII.

On every wall the gloom and dusk of years :
Save where, as if defiance smiled on fate,
A wealth of fresco radiantly appears : *
Yet in this mockery of olden state
Seems not the city doubly desolate ?
E'en as a face that is no longer fair,
Whose eager wintertide would imitate
The vernal blossom it was wont to bear,
Seems sadder for the bloom unseasonably there.

* See Note M.

CXXIX.

O City sad, forsaken, and distressed !

Like one awakened in the night, thine eye
Finds naught that solaces its broken rest :

Alas for such as would but cannot die !

Sleepless, thou searchest the eternal sky
If haply thence thy recompense shall come ;

Till sympathetic morning stills thy sigh,
And noon in pity warms thy features numb,
But unto all save Death thy longing lips are dumb.

CXXX.

O for a bird to lift thy solitude,

Thy shadow, and thy sadness into song ;
That thou mightst drain in one rapt interlude
The gladness that betrays thy soul so long !

O for the cadence ever sweet and strong
Of skylark ! O for linnet's clear refrain !

Or thine, O swallow of the summer throng,
That, breasting, brake the mirror of the main
And imaged its lost heaven sweeter in thy strain !

CXXXI.

What sin was thine that drained thee of thy tears ?
What shame, that now denies thee e'en a grave ? *
What wrong unto the past, which all these years
Have ne'er forgotten if they ne'er forgave ?
Thy streets unsepulchred seem like the nave
That leadeth down the roomy halls of death :
Yet, o'er the charnel-house thy sorrows crave,
Thy fate withstands thee:—nay, nor word she saith ;
Chid by the wind with salt of sad sea tears upon its
breath.

CXXXII.

The wear of chariot-wheels indents the street,
Whose very rust our younger eyes may view :
The Forum, where the old world loved to meet ;
Yea, and the selfsame mansions that they knew ;
The shrines whereat they worshipped ; and the
sweet
Breath of the winds that drew their shallops fleet
Athwart these everlasting seas of blue.
Lo ! are they not the same ? The dead retreat,
And we the living tread the impress of their feet.

* See Note N.

CXXXIII.

Within yon lowly structure by the gate,
Let Sorrow view the desecrated sleep
Of such as shared the city's fiery fate : *
No more the earth enshrouds their slumber deep :
The dead are found ;—say, are there none to weep
In their lone stead that lingered late and long
With welcomes, which their loved should never
reap,
Till fickle hope, erst fashioned swift and strong,
Waned tremulous and weak as echoed notes of song?

CXXXIV.

See ! here they lie—friend—parent—sister—wife,
Dim with the blast of desolation's breath ;
Lone, sad, misshaped similitudes of Life !
Here have the swift impetuous floods of death
Moulded, whilst yet the victim perisheth,
With die indelible, form, features, frame : †
Lo, what the earth in wrung confession saith
Of human suffering and inhuman shame,
Let man in pity and in grief forbear to name !

* See Note O.

† See Note P.

CXXXV.

A spectacle for many a wondering crowd
Tombless they lie that lived so long ago ;
The shadow of our sympathies their shroud ;
Themselves their own best epitaph of woe :
Science, subdued by Death's despairing throe,
For all her labour, finds no more to learn :
Stayed by yon arm that fain averts the blow
Of cinders, which, whatever way it yearn,
Like the live flames of hell light not the souls they
burn.

CXXXVI.

Life's form outlives the vigour born of life ;—
Those outstretched hands implore death's pity
still :
Methinks I see them battling with the strife
Of flame that fevers even the death-chill :
Let me away from hence, that I may fill
My soul with images of ease again ;
Fain would I view the restful sea, until
I lose this agonizing dream of pain,
This vision of despair that knows its last hope vain.

CXXXVII.

Blue gleams the sea, for all the lurid hue
Of those sad days—pray God they come no more !
As then, the sailor anchors off the shore,
And sings the songs that they of old time knew.
The world is changed but little ;—go and view
The ancient city as it was of yore :
Wilt thou not, gazing on its remnant store,
Acquit me, friend, that ever told thee true :
“ Evil is old, ’tis only thou and I are new ! ”

CXXXVIII.

It is not for the gentle Muse to sing
The depths of shame these shameless ruins tell :
Life at its best is an unlovely thing,
As we that live learn early and too well.
Within the soul there’s less of heaven than hell ;
And, save God’s pity triumph at the last,
Man’s self matures that final doomsday fell,
When fiery desolation shall o’ercast
This dream of life with one dread universal blast.

CXXXIX.

This fern-leaf plucked within thy poet-lair
Is hallowed, Glaucus, to thy memory,
Sweet as Ione's tress of maiden hair.
Not every bard that loves the Muse is free
To woo another, as it was with thee :
The Muse, alas ! hath more exacting grown ;
Permitting love, 'tis true, for chivalry ;
But loth that any save herself alone
Should thrill the poet-soul she consecrates her own.

CXL.

Ah me ! what is a poet nowadays ?
A target for a meaner man to hit,
Or damn with faintly condescending praise.
His rhyme is sought—if passion season it—
As is himself—if socially a wit :
But otherwise, O Glaucus ! times are hard
On verse (as Vates), howe'er choicely writ :
Ye gods ! of any specimen ill-starred
Commend me to the unappreciated bard !

* See Note Q.

CXLI.

For all, save him, worth ripens from the worst ;—

The small beginning marks the great career :

But the poor bard must be sublime *at first*,

Or vanish ever from the social sphere.

The budding Judge anticipates the year,

Full ofttimes wreathed ere yet he wears the wig :

E'en Dr. Leech, the world holds passing dear—

That is, his fees. (Wherefore, he makes them big

And oft the verbal practice substantizes *prig*.)

CXLII.

To sing of such were bathos as one speeds

Amid the splendour of the starlit sea :—

The crowded city stunts the soul it feeds.

Hither, 'neath Cynthia's beam, O Memory !

Let nature's beauty minister to thee ;

Or thine, which seems a star amid the night,

O gentle Nataline di Napoli !

Rich is the soul whose memories can sight

One immemorial hour of unalloyed delight !

1.

Chide me not !—the blame if aught
Lies, Carissima, with thee !
Why wast thou so fairly wrought,
Nataline di Napoli !

2.

Wherefore were thine eyes so bright
When they lit, dear love, on me ;—
Stars that leaped to sudden light,
Nataline di Napoli !

3.

Yea, and why thine eyelids' swoon
When I turning looked on thee—
Shadow 'neath love's kindled noon—
Nataline di Napoli !

4.

Wherefore, Cara ! when we meet,—
Sheen of sunrise on the sea—
Crimson flushes make more sweet
Nataline di Napoli ?

5.

Of thy pity, Love! forbear,
That already art to me
All too passionately fair,
Nataline di Napoli!

6.

When life's passion hath no smart,
When love's smile no witchery,
Chide me, if thou wilt, dear heart,
Nataline di Napoli!

7.

When thou canst conceal at will
Every charm endeared in thee,
Chide me, that shall love thee still,
Nataline di Napoli!

8.

Till that day, if blame be mine,
Thou must seek the soul of me
Shrined in that sweet heart of thine
Nataline di Napoli!

CXLIII.

"There's no such solitude as that of crowds : "

Thus, in my teens, I sang of solitude : *
But he that vigils 'neath the yards and shrouds,
When a good craft is in a frisky mood,
May rest where, certes, few will care intrude :
And if the winds amid the rigging rave,
And darkness, with her open-wingèd brood,
Poise 'twixt the watery sky and cloudy wave,
There's no such solitude this side the grave.

CXLIV.

Or, should a gentler humour light the sky,
How soft the scene which woos him with a smile ;
When lambent breezes flit and falter by,
And moonbeams tread the waters mile on mile.
Passing in mute procession like a file
Of infantry, they steal a march well planned
To skirt the mirrored clouds which loom awhile
The huge encampment of a hostile band
Enrolled to ravage, harass, vanquish, or withstand.

* *My Ladye and Others* ("Beauty at a Dinner-party," p. 20).

CXLV.

Here smile to feel that the o'erweening world
Hath no delight so witching as this hour :
Here sigh to know that, when yon sail is furled,
Earth has no charm of banquet-hall or bower
Tender as that night, sky, and sea endower :
Here grieve that thou couldst be enthralled so long
Where pride of place, of passion, or of power
Bids the world muster with a mandate strong,
Where e'en the garlands droop for pity of the
throng :

CXLVI.

And all that art and artifice can do
Makes pleasure toil, and toil a make-believe ;
Where feeling, like a fashion, takes its cue
From calculations—brains, not heart, achieve :
Where matrons with large fans and little sleeve,
And daughters ditto, crowd full sail on you ;
As underclad as buccaneers that heave
Ballast o'erboard with a rich chase in view :—
[Or p'raps a case of "Mate required for the crew"].

1.

Fair Buccaneer ! I prithee, dear,
A scrap more sail abreast,
Less reef, less stay, is far away
More crafty for the quest.

2.

Fleet Buccaneer ! remember, dear,
In case of swells thou'lt find
The pace that's fast, is grief at last
That sails too near the wind.

3.

Coy Buccaneer, is it not clear
That wert thou worth his lance,
You'd be the "chase" (and in the race
You'd lead him a nice dance !)?

4.

Sweet Buccaneer ! just whisper, dear,
A prize with such *broadside*
Is scarce the form one cares to storm,
So prithee, let him glide.

CXLVII.

Like secret lovers who avoid the day,
The wistful sea rewards the kiss of night ;
Nor is there aught their raptures to betray
Save waves that mount and watchfully alight,
The moment's courage soon submerged in fright :
Nor is there sound, save somewhen suddenly
The treacherous wind o'erhears a whisper slight,
The which forbiddenly it bears to me,
With many a secret coyly stolen from the sea.

CXLVIII.

O night, solicitously tender ! Oft
'Twas mine to marvel how thine every kiss
Was sweeter, fonder, and thy sigh more soft
Than any save the lips of woman wis :
Behold ! love's ministry hath taught thee this !
The heart that 'shrines a tender passion, will
Embue our very being with its bliss ;
And, wisting ampler missions to fulfil,
Grow gentler as more strong, and kindlier less chill.

CXLIX.

E'en as a blossom ripens to the sun,

The heart expands that feels love's richer light :
And none are beautiful without it ; none
So sympathetically fond and bright !

Love's bloom of memory fears no winter's blight :
Threescore of hopes have not the saving power
Of one true memory ; unscathed by night,
By danger, by despair, 'neath storm and shower,
It ripens richer, sweeter, to life's latest hour :

CL.

It amplifies itself in solitude ;

It yields a solace by the world denied ;
It bendeth o'er our meditative mood

Till the heart's darkness wakens, beautified
In light and gladness—as a brooding tide
Which mirrors of its stillness the lit sky :

It charms away the mists which, rising, glide
Around the past ; and lights the longing eye
Back to the well beloved of golden days gone by.

CLI.

It is incentive of fidelity,
The talisman which keeps the heart's love true :
It is the monitor with whom we see
All we should cherish, strive for, or eschew,
To mould our lives as love would will us to :
And mem'ry speaks as conscience ;—'twill repeat—
Echo of days beloved and passed from view—
The chidings and the guidings that were sweet
As banks of blossoms round the pathway of life's feet.

CLII.

The heights of Hope are treacherous to reach ;
Rough is the road to such as fain ascend :
Oft, when the eye turns upward to beseech,
The mists of doubt across the goal extend ;
And we, in blindness, know not of the end :
Then, as hope fails, we turn to memory,—
'Twixt them that love, the ever mutual friend—
Sighing:—"Dear Love! the fight goes hard with me ;
Yet, where I sware to thee, *there* shall my footprints
be !"

CLIII.

Over Mount Ætna steals the mantling morn

To drape the vales and dales of Sicily,

Ere yet we sight old Syracuse time-worn :

What grander panorama would one see ?

The green sward climbs the grim volcano's knee,
And looks with wonderment upon its breast

Whereon the snows of half a century

Down from its shoulders negligently rest

As if the winters feared the fiery form they dressed.

CLIV.

Thus ofttimes are the human passions pent

Beneath a crust as callous, calm, and cold :

Thus we conceal swift fires that, long unspent,

Rage as unbridled once they burst their hold :

And, blasting what they beautified, grow bold

With impetus augmented by restraint :

How soon, O Alp ! so seemingly high-souled !

A little whitewash—whether snow or paint,—

Conceals the social sinner in the pseudo saint.

* See Note R.

CLV.

From the far sea, how fair is Syracuse !

Viewed in the dull, grey dawn which rests upon
The landscape like a garment shaped in use :

Adown the pathway whence the night hath gone

The nymphs of light speed breathlessly anon—
Bright maidens that outrun the golden car

Of the great sun who, rising pale and wan,

Journeys to liberate the griefs that are

Bound in the shadowy night's indissoluble bar.

CLVI.

Where rode the fleet that Archimedes wrecked,

On these same classic waters, anchor we ;

'Neath the same walls which Hiero, circumspect,

Preserved to Syracuse thro' treachery : *

Where dwelt Theocritus and tunefully

Sang of the meadows, and the restful kine,

And calm delights of gentle husbandry :

Whom nature crowned the father of a line

Of poets pastoral and rustic strains divine.

* See Note S.

CLVII.

O fair delights of nature! Thou, O Bard!
Found that within the palaces of kings
Which made it none too wearisome nor hard
To nerve thy choral notes to nobler things:
The people's joys were sweeter to thy strings
Than the false blandishments of Hiero's Court:†
The poet-soul hath broader, ampler wings
Than such as princely patronage e'er bought
To tame in gilded bonds for flights by minions
taught.

CLVIII.

Where now I wander, thou wouldst sometimes
wend;
By bowery groves; and water's gushing bound;
And labyrinths, where brooks and breezes blend,
Merging themselves within the sea's resound
That serenades the year's unbroken round:
And bees and buds companionable, where
The skylark 'mid the solitude hath found
Some new delight to warble to the air,
Or rapture, which all land and sky and sea may share.

* Theocritus, "the father of bucolic poetry," lived for some time at Syracuse, at the Court of Hiero the Second.

† See Note T.

CLIX.

As dwells a great soul in soul-solitude,
Here Echo reigns enshrined from mortal reach : †
And all that silently it loves to brood
It yields the world in swift resounding speech ;
And, like true greatness that hath aught to teach,
Proclaims it once again and yet again,
So be the purport shall be plain to each :
Thus, if thou hast a mission worth the strain,
Expand thy gospel in solicitous refrain.

CLX.

Of Sicily I should delight to sing ;
Of brave Marcellus, and the Roman days ;
Of him that thought the world a puny thing,
Compared with what his leverage could raise ; ‡
Would add the Achradina to my lays,
But time and space deny the lute's demand :
Farewell, sweet Sicily ! The bark obeys
The helm that all too swiftly shuns the land :
To-morrow's sun shall gild for us Albania's strand.

* See Note U. † See Note V. ‡ See Note W.

CLXI.

In ampler aims, the Muse is lost to time,
Tho' prizing well each precious link of day :
Some think a poet can be made to chime
And point his periods as a timepiece may—
Tuned, timed, and tempered in the selfsame way.
In Britain, truth ! we are destroyed by hours ;
'Tis "time" to dress, dine, drink, dance, dream,
or play ;
Until it's "time" (if only time empowers)
To reckon Time by what Eternity endowers.

CLXII.

The work in hand recks little of the hours,
Knowing them fated to a final plan :
We note, as pilots, the far beacon-towers,
Not the stern tide the moment tends to span.
The bonds of time contract the soul of man,
Ev'n as its bars, the pinions of a bird :
Who looketh to the milestones cannot scan
The sunny heights where browse the drowsy herd,
The flowers, or the green corn by ripening summer
stirred.

CLXIII.

Here, on the sea, Time merges into Space.
Distant upon the pathway of the deep
He disappears, and leaves the world no trace
Nor living record which the heart can reap
Memorial of his years. On the wave's steep
We seek, but cannot find his foot's impress ;
Nay, nor a floweret, tenderly to keep—
Wreck of his passion, plucked in wantonness,
Rifled of its sweet charms for one fleet hour's caress.

CLXIV.

His footsteps fell like snowflakes on the wave :
No stir of life betrayed his passing by :
Still as the feet that darken to the grave,
His shadowed tread stole silent to the sky :
Here never chimes record the days that die,
Nor belfry-peals proclaim Time's seaward flight ;
None, save the breezes, heard his passing sigh ;
None, save the waves which shadowed to his sight,
And, as they darkened, summoned the consoling
night.

CLXV.

So be it . . . I would fain forget, O sea,
The flight of Time, and earth's receding shore ;
Wandering, as if they were not unto me,
Bright in thine imaged heaven evermore :
Would with thy calm be soothed, and with thy
 roar
Mingle my soul's long-pent desires, and ease
My heart of that it mutely broodeth o'er ;
Would stand within the voices of the breeze
That serenades the slumbrous silence of the seas.

CLXVI.

Up from the deep the queen of night ascends,
And treads the sky in still and pensive mood ;
Calm, beautiful, and pure, she gently tends
The weariness of sky, and earth, and flood ;
Wearing her diadem of womanhood
To soothe, to solace the undying strain
Of life and labour in an interlude
Of slumber that shall be forgetful of their pain,
And visions whence we rise renewed in hope again.

Earth, brooding in thy lover-like embrace,
 Envies thee, Ocean ! that nor winter's blight,
 Drought of the day, nor numbness of the night
Furrow the fadeless beauty of thy face :
Untouched by time thy being bears the trace
 Of Him that made thee beautiful and bright ;
 Thine upturned eye with emulous delight
Mirrors the lustre of His dwelling-place ;

And tho' not ever is it thine to be
 Partaker of its rich eternity,
Yet oft within thine undulating chime
 The Everlasting Spirit speaks with thee :
And so thou dreamest of that joy sublime,—
A life enthroned upon the tomb of Time !

CLXVII.

O woman !—sea ! ye terms convertible !
Spirits so pliant, yet so passing strong !
Ye that our softest sighs suffice to thrill,
Yet heaven's self assuages not erelong,
Sublime in ruth, and sovereign still in wrong !
Your purer passions image Paradise,
Gleam of its smile, re-echo of its song,
Dusk of its shadow, dimple of its sighs,
Dews of its sympathies distilled by angel-eyes !

CLXVIII.

O speech, except in slumber, never still !
What lip hath language of so rich a round
Of rhythmic utterance such as ye at will
Breathe o'er our souls to vibrate there spell-bound?
Sweet symphony is nothing but sweet sound,
Excepting soul impassion its impress ; *
As love unquickened is a love uncrowned,
Whose very charm is cast in callousness :—
The passion void of heart survives not the caress.

* See Note X.

CLXIX.

O woman !—sea ! your swift emotions rise
So causeless oft, yet with what fierce effect
Of devastated hearts and weeping eyes !
O ye, that rend the bloom your tears have decked ;
That wring the passionate heart of love yewrecked ;
That laugh aside the loves of yesterday,
Shall ye not somewhen, in sad retrospect
And unavailing anguish, moan as they
That cherish not dear love till dear love pass away ?

CLXX.

Yet, void of ye, ocean and womanhood,
The world indeed were desolate and drear ;
The margeless earth would be one solitude
Which all man's boasted charm could never cheer ;
What were the soul of song without your clear
Sweet minor-notes to passionate the strain ?
As the wind-voices falter from their sphere,
Merged in the murmurous measures of the main,
So our souls yield what time ye summon and constrain.

CLXXI.

Of either "void" no reasonable fear
Suggests the dread of such a deprivation :
Hibernia boasted sundry women clear
To each male mortal—whence the emigration
Of timorous swains exceeded calculation :
Wherefore, as the award of felony,
In lieu of sentencing to transportation,
I'd tame a ruffian with polygamy :—
His wives, the measure of his criminal degree.

CLXXII.

If nothing else, the sea bestows, methinks,
An appetite that driveth hunger silly ;
O Steward ! thou knowest of the meats and drinks
Whereof we take (what time the sea is stilly,
And oft, the same, what time we can't abate her).
I prithee, if it's said in Piccadilly,
Bear witness that I dine not on a *lily* ;
Kind Brand, affirm, thou very prince to cater,—
A poet's appetite is quenchless as a crater !*

* Henry Brand, steward of the *Norseman*.

I.

The mariner bends bravely to the oar ;
The sea-smile dimples to the day's return ;
Athwart the bow lies fair Albania's shore,
Whilst Corfu glistens distantly astern.

2.

Gaily we hie to battle with the boar ;—
The wild, fierce boar within his native lair :
Throbs there a heart that doth not thrill the more
To leap to land, and win brave laurels there !

3.

Touching the strand, right proudly we appear ;
Our weapons gleaming in the golden light ;
Attendant tars to poise the ready spear,
Wild Albanese to guide us o'er the height.†

4.

We tread the gorge where, in confusion, lie
Boulders upheaved hap-hazard by the years ;
Thro' which the bramble struggles toward the sky
To bask within the sunshine of the spheres :

* See Note Y.

† See Note Z.

5.

Breasting the steep, the sturdy Albanese
Stride onward silent, swift, and ever stern,
As if the hazard of hostilities
Augured the wanderers never should return.

6.

Thro' thorny jungles where no blossoms blend
To carpet earth, or deck yon aërial shelves ;
Nor forests whisper to the winds that wend
Amid a scene as homeless as themselves.

7.

With seemly care we follow, for who knows
Where death in porcine guise may lurk unseen ;
Or where, with mighty rush, his charge shall close,
Ere ever spear or rifle intervene ?

8.

Stealthily, each to his appointed place
Suspiciously pursues the treacherous way ;
Expectant of the swine at every pace ;
The flaming weapon thirsting for the fray.

9.

In readiness, I take th' allotted stand ;
Alone, save for my brave attendant tar :
The others, sentinelled by due command,
Are scattered thro' the ravine near and far.

10.

Their voices die away 'mid vale and hill ;
The very breeze grows weary of its sigh ;
The land is silent, and the sea is still ;
And not a cloud molests the sunny sky.

11.

Speechless, and solemn as befits the haunt
Of sudden death, the wild crags darken me ;
Draping the valley with a shadow gaunt
As ever pall that shrouds mortality :

12.

Then suddenly mine henchman grasps my hand :
"Hearken!" he whispers, "lo! that grunting
sound!"
I list! I hear not, yet with stablished stand
Await the brute's infuriated bound :

13.

List ! The resounding echoes of a gun
Leap down the cleft, and seaward disappear :
What if a stricken boar should hither run,
Whilst our own quarry charges in the rear !

14.

I turn not—constant to mine olden prey ;
Whilst “ Jack ” stands sentry for the wounded
chase ;
Thus, back to back, we bide the double fray ;
Each ready for a foeman face to face.

15.

A lengthened pause, unbroken by a word :
We wait the enemy with bated breath :
The bramble (whereon sits a startled bird)
Warns his approach—now victory or death !

16.

Now is the moment when the heart swells large !
The bosom thrills ! the life-blood courses warm !
The dead leaves rustle ! now he turns to charge !
(A timorous hare evacuates her form !)

17.

Then, as with ready hand and steadfast eye
I watch and wait, a rabbit fearlessly,
A gentle rabbit, calmly nibbles by,
And looks with a confiding gaze on me !

18.

Thus we, right gallantly, against despair,
Grew doughty, watching hares and rabbits run :
A harmless sport which yields nor pang nor pain,
Void of excitement, 'tis not void of fun.

19.

There's not a brute (save him that led us here)
Nor ghost of sport (save Spiro's little game) ;
The only *boar* that's certain to appear,—
The play on words suggested by the name.

20.

If sport consist in stalking the unseen,
Pig-sticking, certes ! is a chase divine !
The unexpected, to the wise, I ween,
That hither hunt, will ever be—*the swine*.*

* See Note AA.

CLXXIII.

A slender islet, gemmed in solitude,
 Woos me across her crystal maze of sea :
Now dies the glittering oar-drip on the flood ;
 And the dim cypress, the isle's guardian tree,
 Welcomes the wanderer with mute courtesy :
The ocean-depths have worn themselves to sleep,
 'Neath azure coverlets which restlessly
Thrill to the breasts that tremulously keep
The never-written records of the deathless deep.

CLXXIV.

A still hush slumbers on the evening air :
 A rapture rests within the blent embrace
Of light and shadow meeting, mingling there :
 A fair glow flushes the wan twilight's face,
 Glow of dead gleams, such as Love's memories
 trace :
The west is crimson-carpeted, where trod
 The Day-king up the corridors of Space ;
While, kneeling in the shadow on the sod,
Night views the portals of the Paradise of God.

* See Note BB.

CLXXV.

Here might I live, were one but all unloved :
 (Or too-well loving, which is oft more sad !)
Sunned in thy sheeny solitudes ; or moved
 To lyric song when spring grows summer-clad.
What boots, dear heart, the raptures thou hast had,
Compared with this Elysium of rest ?
 Here might the weary heart of life be glad ;
Here might the bitter of all grief be blessed,
Ripened to sweetness 'neath the sunbeams' radiant
 zest.

CLXXVI.

Alas, clear skies ! life's labour claims its due ;
 Would we could linger in so fair a clime !
Yon gun, resounding, bids me back anew
 To joys less sweet, howbeit more sublime :
For toil is the sublimity of Time,
Even as rest is of Eternity :
 So shall we labour till life's sunset-chime
Summons the warder of the gates that be
Hinged on the voiceless outposts of the Western Sea.

He falters not who never thinks to fail :
Life's effort stablishes itself in hope :
Strong is the door that will not sometime ope
To him that wisteth only to prevail :
Within the droop of darkness stands the pale
Pure dawn upon his distant Orient slope ;
His fair light curtained 'neath his watchman's
 cope,
Which yet his hand shall loose o'er hill and dale :

So let us watchful stand within the gloom
Of life's distress : the courage which can wait
Full oftentimes out-wearies even Fate :
The light of a pure purpose falls in bloom
Of rosy radiance even on the tomb
Of hopes which else had left us desolate.

CLXXVII.

Ere easternward we steer, farewell my lay,
Accept, O Muse! this cadence of the shore ;
Full many a thought constrains my heart to stay,
But the rich sea will yield as many more :
Thought is no stranger all the wide world o'er ;
Nor memory, which, wheresoe'er we roam,
Vibrates in chords long listened to of yore—
Wind, wood and water, shingle and sea foam,
Recall the vanished voices of sweet love and home.

CLXXVIII.

Now, as the lessening landscape fades from view,
A thousand farewells tremble in my song :—
How can we bear to part from those long true,
Nor sigh that know them lost to us as long !
Our love in severance seems doubly strong,
Sunned to fair summer in each stranger-clime :
Ah ! chide them not, the notes of love which
throng
Voiced 'mid these votive cadences of rhyme,
Nor Memory's commingling tributary chime.

CLXXIX.

Dear Muse ! I cannot breathe that word adieu,
Which, sighed to thee, would loose my soul from
aught
It holds most treasured, tender, and most true :
Lost to thy love, my life were less than naught ;
My hopes are bounded in thy being,—caught
Upwards on the wings of imagery,
Thy bosom yields the rest their yearnings
sought :
Fain would I be the least in serving thee,
Than great, with ear untuned to all thou teachest
me.

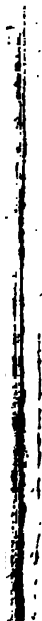
CLXXX.

My heart of love is loth to let thee go.
From far Marseilles to this Hellenic land,
By sea and shore 'twas ever mine to know
The gracious guidance of thy guardian hand :
Be thou not deaf unto my soul's demand ;
Spurn not my love, which thy love maketh brave ;
Lo ! Smyrna, Stamboul, Ephesus, the strand
Which guards the dust of Athens, and the grave
Of the proud glories of her past, demand thy stave !

CLXXXI.

If not—— Farewell ! Our grief is not all vain,
Whose shadow grim betrays this gleam of
good ;—
They part in love that part in tears and pain !
O thou that shielded, as thou only could,
My weakness in thy strength of womanhood,
Keep my fain heart, since it is ever thine ;
I ask no more save only, if thou would,
Loose from thy lute one dear memorial line
That, ever echoing in me, thy soul speak in mine.





NOTES.

NOTE A.

Time was, the sick, the suffering, knew her care.

Whilst the above stanza is passing through press, my attention is drawn to the following from the *Illustrated London News* of August 2, 1884 :—

“The visits of an Orleans Prince to the cholera patients in the south of France have called forth some interesting reminiscences of the Empress Eugénie from a lady who accompanied her during the last visitation of the epidemic to the hospital at Amiens. The Empress spoke a few pious words to a dying man, who, thinking the voice was that of the *religieuse* who had been ministering to him, endeavoured to kiss the hand that pressed his own, murmuring, ‘Thank you, sister.’ The nun bent over him, saying, ‘It is not I ; it is our good Empress who speaks to you ;’ but her Majesty said, ‘Let be, my sister ; he cannot call me by a better name !’ A few minutes later one of the physicians opened by mistake the door of the small-pox ward, but immediately warned the Empress (who was then in the full ripe bloom of her beauty) to retire. She, however, insisted on visiting the patients, but would not allow her *dame de compagnie* to cross the threshold. It was small wonder that on returning to St. Cloud it was found that the hem of her dress had had numerous pieces cut out of it by the crowd, who affectionately treasured them as relics. The pity of it is that French crowds are so fickle !”

NOTE B.

A dream of old walls.

The old republic of Genoa was well fortified ; portions of the two inner circles of walls, dated 1159 and 1357 respectively, are still visible. The outer circuit of fortifications is more modern, having been erected to entrench the city against the present dynasty towards the close of the last century.

NOTE C.

*“ Have we not erewhile from the noonday sun
Sheltered the mighty Doria as he passed
Down to the galleys which undaunted won
His State’s deliverance, and overcast
The Gallic fleet with dread infuriate blast ?*

The great Andrea Doria (Il Principi), who, amongst many services to the commonwealth, turned the balance of war against the French in 1528 by the timely appearance of his fleet of twenty-two galleys, manned at his individual expense. The sword sent to him by Paul III. for services rendered to the Church hangs over the high altar at San Matteo’s. The city is full of mementoes of this patriot, who, by his prudence and forethought, secured to it a form of government which survived its promulgator, and perished only with the republic itself.

NOTE D.

*Alas that we should see Masséna’s pride,
His fortitude, his courage desolate !*

The inner walls, erected in great part by the people’s voluntary labour, defended the city, under Masséna, against the Gallo-Sardinian army under Carlo Emanuele, Duke of Savoy. The besieged endured undescrivable hardships, and were eventually starved out, after immense suffering and loss from disease and famine. Thus entered the present dynasty.

NOTE E.

*And misery forbears to pine,
That found a friend in Catherine !*

The verb *forbear* is advisedly used in the present tense, since to this day thousands are indebted to Catherine Adorno for the alleviation of pain and sickness.

The Ospedale di Pammatone is situated hard by the gardens of the Acquasola. Originally the private foundation of Bartolomeo del Bosco, a Doctor of Laws, 1430. It was built from the design of Andrea Orsolini, and is a fine institution, containing hall and staircase flanked with statues of benefactors. It opens its wards to an average of one thousand patients and three thousand foundlings, and welcomes the sick of all nations.

But it is with the name of Catherine Adorno, rather than with that of founder or architect, that the hospital is inseparably associated: revered by many who yet remember the legends of her charity and blameless life, it has for years been the resort of many a pilgrim. Her frescoes are still to be seen, and, to our sorrow be it said, her very remains are made the subject of spectacle and show. Better than such glazed and jewelled mockery of sepulchre were the calm and well-earned rest of some rustic solitude 'mid the vales of the Lombardy she loved !

NOTE F.

*High place among the women who
Are fair to ponder as to view
These time-worn chronicles of thine
Have won for thee, sweet Catherine !*

Her great work, the *Spiritual Dialogues*, thought by Schlegel to be a most surprising effort of genius, has recently been translated into English, and is much valued by lovers of mystic literature. The good and talented authoress was canonized by Pope Clement XII. in the year 1739.

NOTE G.

*Not evermore shall he who sings forget
The kindly welcomes of that fond retreat.*

The Villa Novello, charming home of the well-known Shakspearean authority, Mrs. Cowden-Clarke, and the Novello family. Fortunate are those who possess the friendship of these talented sisters and their brother, and who have the opportunity of sharing some of the pleasant hours for which their villa is proverbial.

NOTE H.

The Leaning Tower of Pisa.

“There is no doubt that the Tower of Pisa was originally intended to stand perpendicular, but before the commencement of the fifth story the foundations had given way, and attempts to readjust the work are traceable in the upper stories, but without success. It leans 11 ft. 2 in. out of the perpendicular, and is entirely built of white marble.”—Col. Playfair’s *Mediterranean*.

NOTE I.

*Yon marble mourner, to his city’s shame,
Droops o’er the treasured pages.*

Two huge marble women stand beneath the drooping figure of the poet; one clenches a wreath which she proffers him not, the other clasps a volume of the master’s song, which might be topsyturvy for all she reads thereof. This suggestive monument is in the Church of Santa Croce.

NOTE J.

See! how the mourners wander down the street.

The Battle of Lake Trasimenus, one of Hannibal’s most decisive victories, wherein the Roman Consul and fifteen thousand of his

troops were slain. On receiving news of this defeat, and of the death of the Consul Æmilius Paulus the following year, at the Battle of Cannæ, Rome ordered a general mourning, and appointed Q. Fabius Maximus Dictator.

NOTE K.

. . . *Peerless womanhood immortalized in stone.*

Surely it is an instance of the irony of fate that this sovereign statue, personifying *Soul*, should find its abiding-place in such a city as that of the feckless Neapolitan.

NOTE L.

Tuned by the muse for Virgil's rhythmic hand to ring.

Virgil lived in a villa on the Posilipo, and there composed the *Georgics* and the *Æneid*. Not far off is the poet's tomb, where, B.C. 19, he was buried by his own desire.

NOTE M.

A wealth of fresco radiantly appears.

The Pompeian frescoes are in a wonderful state of preservation (some, perhaps, a little too much so for the more delicate susceptibilities of this century), and many of the porticos bright to a degree. One frequently sees notices printed in red characters inviting our suffrages for some particular candidate for the office of duumvir or ædile.

NOTE N.

*What sin was thine that drained thee of thy tears ?
What shame, that now denies thee e'en a grave ?*

Ashes and red-hot rapilli buried the city to a depth of over twenty feet, large portions of which have been removed, leaving disentombed the more principal features of the city.

NOTE O.

*Let Sorrow view the desecrated sleep
Of such as shared the city's fiery fate.*

The remains of over five hundred victims have been exhumed from the cinders of the city. In the years 1861-1872 alone, over eighty-seven human skeletons were found, and those of three dogs and seven horses.

NOTE P.

*Here have the swift impetuous floods of death
Moulded, whilst yet the victim perisheth,
With die indelible, form, features, frame.*

Seventeen women and children were found in a vault under the Villa of Diomedes, their heads wrapped in cloths to avert the pulverized ashes that entered through the crevices. The impression made on the ashes by a girl's breast is yet preserved.

NOTE Q.

The House of Glaucus.

Readers of Lytton's "Last Days of Pompeii"—and they are many, especially in this vicinity—are not slow in visiting the "House of the Tragic Poet," where they are told Glaucus lived, attended by the blind girl Nydia. The maiden-hair fern grows plentifully in the patio—sole thing of life faithful to this classic abode.

NOTE R.

Mount Ætna.

Ætna, the most celebrated mountain in Europe, is 10,874 feet above the sea-level, and appears even more—rising, as it does, sheer from the water's edge. It is divided by the Sicilians into three parts, or regions,—the lava or lower, the wooded or middle, and the upper. The lower contains vineyards, corn-fields, pastures, and

many towns, villages, and convents; the middle is crowded with forests of oak, chestnut, ash, fir, and pine, and with an infinite number of aromatic plants; the upper is entirely destitute of vegetation, and the summit is always covered with ice and snow, except here and there where it is overspread with a thick layer of black ashes.

“From the great crater at the top issues continually a sulphureous smoke; but the eruptions hence are very rare, as fire cannot rise to that height without extraordinary exertions, and the lava breaks out at some fissure where it finds the least opposition. Besides the fruits, which are the finest in the island, and the wood for fuel, which Ætna affords, the inhabitants likewise derive a great profit from its snow—an indispensable necessity in Naples and South Italy for cooling purposes” (Beeton).

NOTE S.

*Where rode the fleet that Archimedes wrecked,
On these same classic waters, anchor we;
'Neath the same walls which Hiero, circumspect,
Preserved to Syracuse thro' treachery.*

Of Archimedes, the great Greek mathematician, it is almost unnecessary to write, but, for the sake of such as may have neglected their Livy, it may be as well to state that when Marcellus besieged Syracuse in the year 212 B.C., Archimedes (said to be related to Hiero) invented numerous machines for harassing the Romans; notably a lever, to which was attached a hook to catch hapless craft, and, raising, submerge them.

Hiero II. carried on war against Carthage, but afterwards joining in besieging Messina, was beaten by Appius Claudius, the Roman Consul; whereupon, having retired to Syracuse, and finding the cause of Carthage well-nigh lost, and his own forces completely blocked, he made peace with Rome, to whom he rendered faithful service for the remainder of his reign.

NOTE T.

*The people's joys were sweeter to thy strings
Than the false blandishments of Hiero's Court.*

The sequel shows the sagacity of the conclusion. Had he limited his lays to rustic delights, he had never written that satire against Hiero which resulted in the poet being strangled by order of that tyrant.

NOTE U.

The Syracusan Echo.

It is recorded of Dionysius that he constructed a prison-cell with such acoustic susceptibilities that he could over-hear even the whispers of the incarcerated.

Visitors are shown a grotto, called the *Ear of Dionysius*, believed to be the veritable gaol:—O that mine enemy on his bridal-tour would talk therein! Echo—the ancient rendering of our modern Carey—survives the tyrant, and is frequently conversational if not confidential, howbeit he is an informer out of place with no offers. I half suspect that, in his old age, he has turned averse to eaves-dropping, since he returned me my confidences the moment he received them, though some of them were of a most compromising character.

NOTE V.

*As dwells a great soul in soul-solitude,
Here Echo reigns enshrined from mortal reach.*

The echo, here referred to, resides in a precipitous cleft hard by the *Latomia del Paradiso*, and is in truth a lofty soul compared with his meaner neighbour, the *Ear*.

NOTE W.

*Of him that thought the world a puny thing,
Compared with what his leverage could raise.*

That wise man, Archimedes, professed himself ready to find sufficient leverage to exalt this planet if he could only stand, during the opera-

tion, on some neighbouring sphere. I think he showed considerable prudence in wishing to avoid closer experience of the earth's moving powers, as here, under the shadow of Ætna, it is confidently affirmed they are considerable. We are not told that our planetary neighbours troubled the sage with offers on this occasion ;—sagacious planets.

NOTE X.

*Sweet symphony is nothing but sweet sound,
Excepting soul impassion its impress.*

In *A Poet's Sketch-Book*, by Mr. Robert Buchanan, a volume issued before the publication, though not before the writing of the above, occurs the following beautiful passage—so apposite, that I am tempted to quote it :—

“We have sweet sounds everywhere : in the wash of the sea, in the rustle of leaves, in the song of birds, in the murmur of happy living things. The world is full of them, its heart aches with them ; they are mystical and they are homeless. It is the office of poetry not barely to imitate them, but to link them with the Soul, and by so doing to use them as symbols of definite form and meaning. They issue from the soul's voice with a new wonder in their tones, and are then ready to be used as man's perfect language and speech to God.”

NOTE Y.

A Ballade of Albania.

So much has been written about Albania, that I was forced to degenerate to the swine in order to unearth an original theme. The chief difficulty lay with the Muse herself, to whom the subject suggested deficiencies both as regards form and rhythm, which she confessed herself almost incompetent to supplement. The matter was eventually compromised by an agreement which gave her full control of certain stanzas wherein the wind, wood, and waves were to be fully mentioned—these being her peculiar province.

She was, however, cruelly reft of her stipulated perquisites, as we

turned landward from the sea, cleftward from the woods; whereupon the wind left us in disgust, very nearly followed by the aggrieved Muse: hence a ballad that might easily be better.

NOTE Z.

*Attendant tars to poise the ready spear,
Wild Albanese to guide us o'er the height.*

We were accompanied by a numerous cavalcade of Albanians. Pages *ad nauseam* have been writ concerning the picturesque attire of these individuals; a style which looked at its best, thrown into bold relief by the blue jackets and white hats of the sailors and our own shooting-velveteens. The chief of the tribe superintended our advance over paths which could easily be known only to himself, since they were invisible to all but native eyes: but our guide proper was one Spiro, chartered from Corfu. I use the word "one" advisedly, as in that town it is safe to call any one Spiro, and in nine cases out of ten you are not misinformed. This gentleman's name (pronounced *Spero*) occasioned serious disaster on my remarking that our spearman should march to their doughty deeds to the motto of *Dum vivo Spero*. I believe several of our party felt unwell after this; but they picked up considerably at luncheon in more ways than one.

NOTE AA.

*The unexpected, to the wise, I ween,
That hither hunt, will ever be—the swine.*

It is only due to Albania and to the swine themselves (should they exist) to state that it had been arranged for us to have been amongst them six weeks earlier. After our unsuccessful days, considerable care was taken to remind us that the season was advanced. But as the same authorities had previously held out prodigious prospect of sport up to the very hour of the expedition, they were probably as mistaken in their former, as we know them to have been in their latter opinion; especially as it came to our knowledge that some of these local Solomons had accompanied equally unsuc-

cessful expeditions to some part or other of Albania daily, for the last three weeks. We moreover heard that the old boars had betaken themselves and their families to the uplands, very much after the practice of the elderly British ditto to the Engadine. I should look on any one as a friend who would present me with a veritable stuffed pig, born, bred, and bulleted in Albania.

NOTE BB.

Lake Calichiopulo.

The "lake" is in reality an inlet of the sea, somewhat two and a half miles south of Corfu. The island referred to is situated in the centre of the strait and looks most picturesque, crowned with a miniature chapel of Byzantine architecture. It claims to be the veritable *Ship of Ulysses* which, overtaken by the vengeance of Neptune, was changed into stone as it was bearing the hero to Ithaca (*Od.*, xiii. 161).

The genius of Pope might have handled the incident with more becoming beauty than he does in the following, which certainly does not "sweep the liquid way" with regard to the final rhyme :—

"Swift as the swallow sweeps the liquid way,
The wingèd pinnace shot along the sea ;
The god arrests her with a sudden stroke,
And roots her down an everlasting rock."



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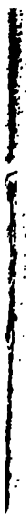
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